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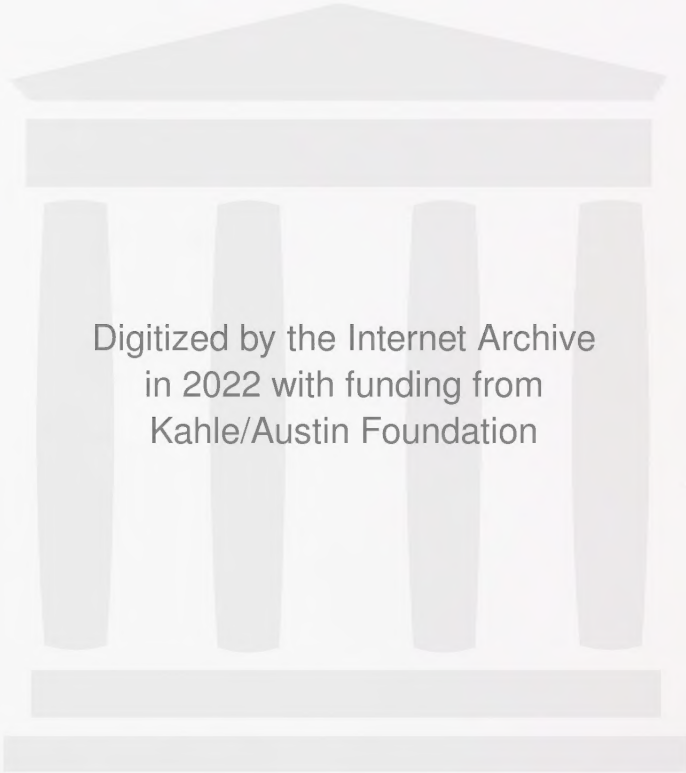
W.i.t.c.h
Will Irma Taranee Cornelia Hay Lin
Part V.
The Book of Elements
Volume 3
THE GRAPHIC NOVEL

Novel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W.i.t.c.h
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Part V:
The Book of Elements
Volume 3

Witch

Will · Irma · Taranee · Cornelia · Hay Lin

Part V.
The Book of Elements
Volume 3

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The Island of Memories

"I wanna shout it to the whole world...
You're my best friend!"

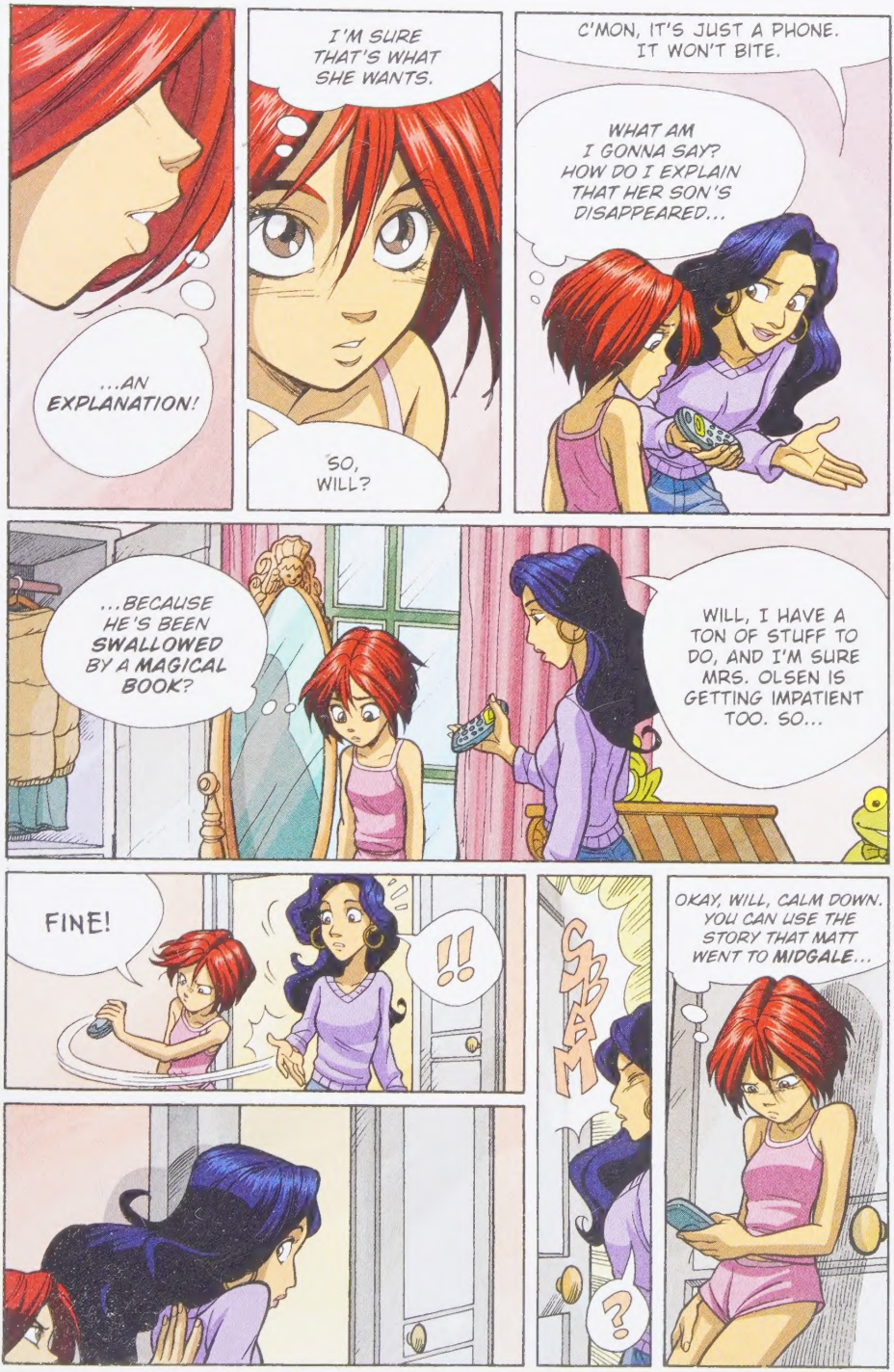
DRIIN
BREEP BREEEP
HEATHERFIELD. TWO PHONES ARE RINGING IN UNISON AT OPPOSITE ENDS OF THE CITY.
DRIIIN DRIIN
BREEEP BREEEP

AT THE VANDOM HOUSE, IT'S SUSAN...
HELLO?
AT THE COOK HOUSE, IT'S PETER...

Oh, hi, Nigel! Looking for Taranee?

WIIILL!
HUH?

THE SAME INITIAL REACTION FROM THE TWO GIRLS...
I DON'T WANNA TALK TO HER.
TELL HIM I'M NOT HOME.
...AND THE SAME SURPRISE FROM PETER AND SUSAN!
HUH? WHY SHOULD I DO THAT?
C'MON, THAT'S NOT NICE. IT'S MATT'S MOM!
NO NEED TO BE SO NERVOUS. SHE JUST WANTS TO TALK TO YOU.
WINK
OKAY, I'LL COVER FOR YOU. BUT YOU OWE ME...
BUT VERY DIFFERENT CONCLUSIONS FOR THE TWO SITUATIONS.


...AN EXPLANATION!
I'M SURE THAT'S WHAT SHE WANTS.
SO, WILL?
C'MON, IT'S JUST A PHONE. IT WON'T BITE.
WHAT AM I GONNA SAY? HOW DO I EXPLAIN THAT HER SON'S DISAPPEARED...
...BECAUSE HE'S BEEN SWALLOWED BY A MAGICAL BOOK?
WILL, I HAVE A TON OF STUFF TO DO, AND I'M SURE MRS. OLSEN IS GETTING IMPATIENT TOO. SO...
FINE!
!!
SLAM
?
OKAY, WILL, CALM DOWN. YOU CAN USE THE STORY THAT MATT WENT TO MIDGALE...

...TO HELP THIS STEVEN MOVE, YOU SAID?
That's right.
...THEN HE DECIDED TO STAY FOR A FEW DAYS.
Without asking his mother first, obviously.
I DON'T THINK MATT'S EVER MENTIONED THIS "FRIEND" BEFORE...
...but I guess parents don't know that much about the lives of their teenage kids, right?
NOT KNOWING... SOMETIMES IGNORANCE IS BLISS, MRS. OLSEN...
...FOR OTHERS, IT'S TORTURE. OH, MATT, WHAT I WOULDN'T GIVE TO KNOW IF YOU'RE OKAY!
.....
?

SORRY, WILL. DON'T THINK I'M A NEUROTIC MOTHER.
It's just that... sometimes you kids can be so MYSTERIOUS!
You know, I should've seen it coming. I have the feeling that Matt is just doing this to MAKE ME PAY...
?
...FOR AN ARGUMENT WE HAD JUST BEFORE I LEFT.
I...I wouldn't know...
DON'T WORRY, DEAR. YOU DON'T HAVE TO TELL ME ANYTHING. I'M SURE HE'LL CALL ME.
"I ONLY NEED TO KNOW HE'S OKAY..."

SURE YOU'RE OKAY?
SURE YOU DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO TELL YOUR BIG BRO?
WHAT'S UP, SIS? YOU LOOK SO GLOOMY!
WHY DON'T YOU WANNA TALK TO NIGEL? I THOUGHT THINGS WERE SMOOTH WITH YOU TWO.
I MEAN, I JUST HAD TO LIE ON THE PHONE... I HAVE A RIGHT TO KNOW WHY, DON'TCHA THINK?

IT'S... IT'S HARD TO EXPLAIN, PETE...
HEY, DON'T UNDERESTIMATE ME! I CAN BE UNDERSTANDING.
I STILL REALLY CARE ABOUT HIM, BUT...
BUT...?
B-BUT SOMETHING CHANGED. I'VE CHANGED! I'M HAVING NEW EXPERIENCES, MAKING NEW FRIENDS, AND MAYBE I DON'T...
...NIGEL WANTS ME TO ONLY THINK ABOUT HIM!
SO HE FEELS NEGLECTED. IT'S BECAUSE OF DANCE SCHOOL, IF I UNDERSTAND YOU RIGHT.
NO! THE TRUTH IS I'M...
...I'M NOT SURE ABOUT MY FEELINGS FOR NIGEL ANYMORE!
!!

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "YOU'RE NOT SURE?"
I HEARD YOU SAY YESTERDAY THAT YOU WERE GOING OUT WITH MATT...AND NOW IT TURNS OUT HE'S BEEN IN MIDGALE FOR A FEW DAYS.
SO COME CLEAN.
UM... MAYBE I GOT CONFUSED AND SAID THE WRONG NAME...
I WANTED TO TELL YOU ABOUT MATT, REALLY, BUT THEN...SO MUCH HAS BEEN GOING ON LATELY, AND...I DUNNO... IT'S ALL SO...
...RIDICULOUS!
DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA OF THE SACRIFICES HE MADE TO BE WITH YOU?
!
HE HAD THE GUTS TO FACE HIS BROTHER'S AND OUR MOM'S PREJUDICES, AND YOU...

...THAT'S HOW YOU REPAY HIM?
PETER... TRY TO UNDER-STAND! I...
NO, I DON'T WANNA UNDERSTAND. MAYBE YOU NEED TO GET YOUR BRAIN IN GEAR!
"...YOU GOTTA HAVE A REALLY GOOD REASON TO EVEN THINK ABOUT BREAKING UP WITH NIGEL!"
WHATEVER THE REASON FOR YOUR CHANGE OF HEART...
OH, PETER, I'M SO SORRY. I...
...DIDN'T MEAN TO DISAPPOINT YOU!
AND YOU HAVEN'T, HONEY. I'M JUST WORRIED ABOUT YOU.

I'M AFRAID THE UPCOMING CHANGES ARE STARTING TO UPSET YOU A BIT... THAT'S NORMAL!
I'M SO *PROUD* OF HOW WELL YOU TOOK THE NEWS OF MY WEDDING TO DEAN, BUT... HONEY...
...YOU DON'T HAVE TO ACT TOUGH ALL THE TIME! HIDING FROM ME WHEN YOU FEEL CONFUSED OR INSECURE...
...WON'T HELP EITHER OF US ENJOY THIS MOMENT TO THE FULLEST.
MAMA
DON'T BE AFRAID TO BE YOURSELF, WILL. NEVER!
...I'M SO GLAD YOU'RE HERE.
IT'S GONNA BE OKAY. YOU'LL SEE.
OH, MOM...

SPEAKING OF DIFFICULT MOMENTS... SHEFFIELD INSTITUTE, A FEW HOURS LATER. MATH CLASS.
IT'S GONNA BE OKAY. IT'S GONNA BE OKAY..
NELSON! SIX. I EXPECTED BETTER!
LIN. NOT TOO BAD! YOU DID A LOT BETTER THAN ON THE LAST QUIZ.
YAY!
COOK! REALLY WELL DONE. TOP OF THE CLASS. NOT ONE MISTAKE!
THANKS, SIR!
NOW HE'S GONNA SAY MY NAME... I KNOW IT.
AND NOW THE MOST CATASTROPHIC QUIZ OF ALL. NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THAT.
HARD TO SEE THE BLUE INK UNDER ALL THE RED... MISS LAIR!
÷GULP÷ THANKS FOR TELLING EVERYONE!
OKAY, NOW OPEN YOUR BOOKS TO PAGE 15...
PSST! Irma!
HUH?

If...if there's something you didn't get... I mean, if you want, we can try studying TOGETHER!
What, so you can rub in how much I SUCK?
!!
If you don't want to, we don't have to... I get it...
I'M SUCH A FOOL! SHE OFFERS TO HELP, AND I INSULT HER!
I SHOULD BE MORE APPRECIATIVE.
OKAY, IRMA, YOU CAN FIX THIS. GIVE YOUR PRIDE A BREAK AND...

SO AS YOU CAN SEE, CHANGING THE ORDER OF THE ADDENDS ...

...THE RESULT REMAINS THE SAME!

HUH?

Sorry!
I'm not exactly
Miss Finesse.
Offer still valid
The Sucker

DRiiiiNN

THIS AFTERNOON, BEFORE WE MEET UP WITH EVERYONE ELSE AT *HQ*?

COME TO MY PLACE! TO SAY SORRY, I'LL PREPARE MY FAMOUS HOMEMADE PUDDING AND...

TARANEE!

SHEILA!

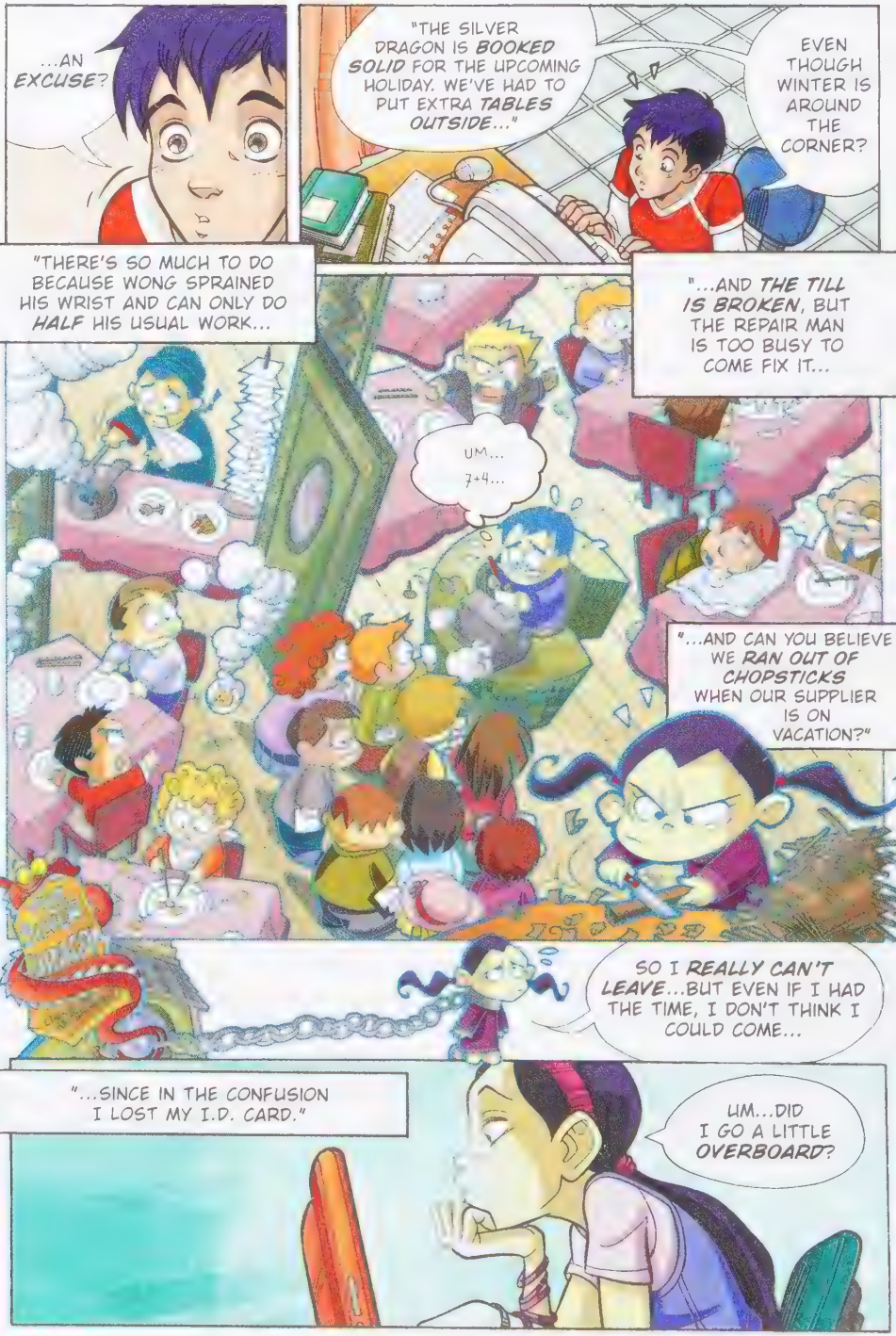
GREAT NEWS! ARE YOU READY?

THERE'S GONNA BE A MEETING BETWEEN ***JENSEN DANCE ACADEMY*** AND THE SINGER IN ***BLACK SHADOW*** TO WORK ON AN ACT TOGETHER.

WOW...

IT'S ONLY FOR SENIOR STUDENTS PREPPING FOR THE FINAL EXAM, BUT...
...I CONVINCED DAD TO MAKE AN EXCEPTION FOR THE THREE OF US—YOU, ME, AND LUKE... WHADDAYA SAY?
GREAT! AWESOME! I'M SO THERE!
WHEN'S THE MEETING?
THIS AFTER-NOON!
OH...
IS THERE A PROBLEM?
NO, NO PROBLEM! HANG ON A SEC...
IRMA...UMM...ABOUT THIS AFTERNOON...

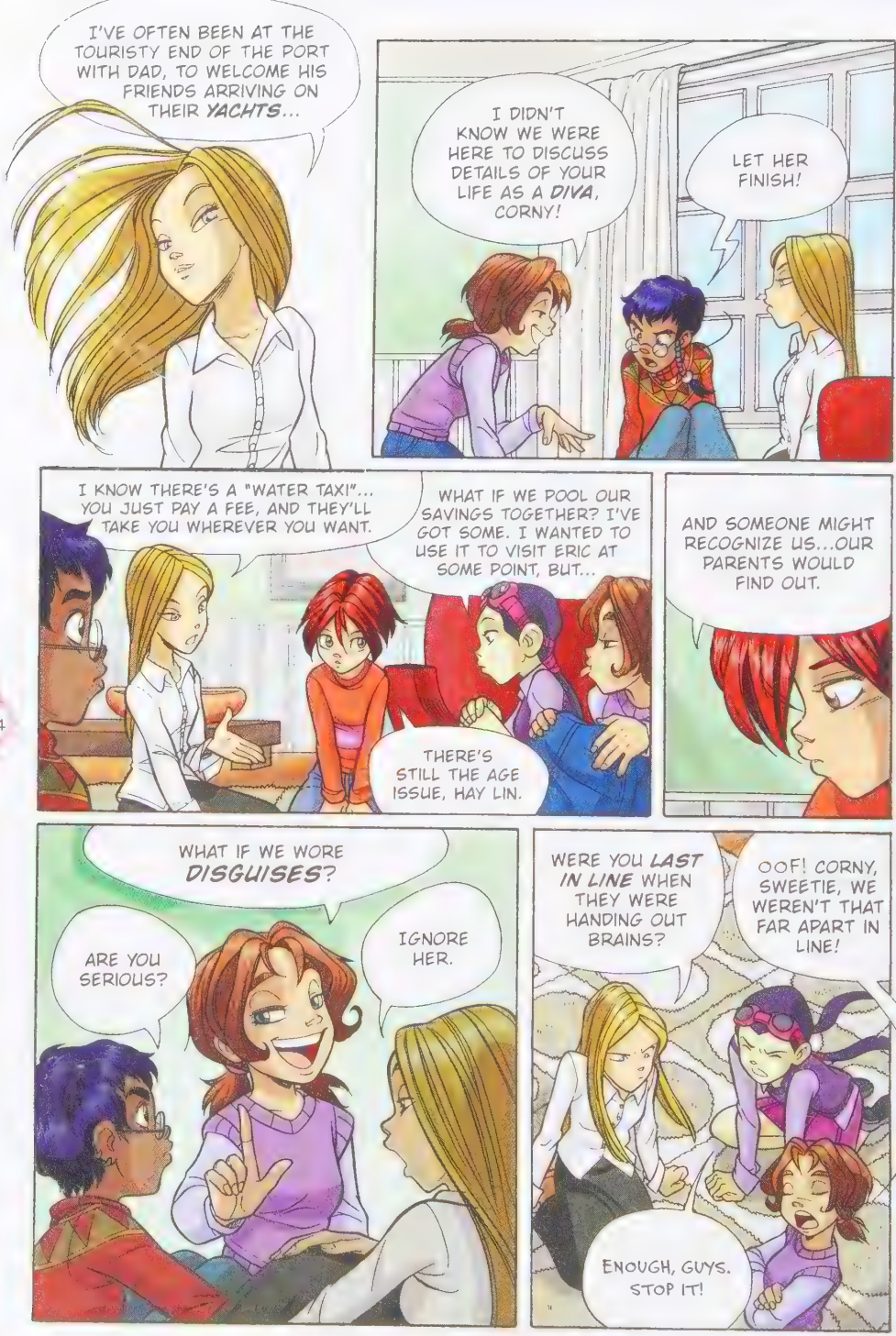
TA TAP
TA TA TAP
ERIC, DO YOU MIND IF WE POSTPONE?
DIFFERENT PLACE, SAME AWKWARDNESS. A FEW HOURS LATER, IN HAY LIN'S ROOM.
"UNFORTUNATELY, I CAN'T COME VISIT YOU IN OPEN HILL ON OUR NEXT DAY OFF."
"YEAH, SADLY I CAN'T LEAVE THE GIRLS."
OOF!
WILL WE HAVE TO SAVE THE WORLD NEXT WEEKEND PRECISELY?
BUT...HOW CAN I TELL YOU?
From: Hay Lin
To: Eric
Cc:
Subject: Holidays
Hi, Eric!
WHERE DO I FIND THE RIGHT WORDS TO ANSWER YOUR E-MAIL WITHOUT HAVING MY MESSAGE SOUND LIKE...
THE SILVER DRAGON
CHINESE RESTAURANT


...AN EXCUSE?
"THE SILVER DRAGON IS BOOKED SOLID FOR THE UPCOMING HOLIDAY. WE'VE HAD TO PUT EXTRA TABLES OUTSIDE..."
EVEN THOUGH WINTER IS AROUND THE CORNER?
"THERE'S SO MUCH TO DO BECAUSE WONG SPRAINED HIS WRIST AND CAN ONLY DO HALF HIS USUAL WORK...
"...AND THE TILL IS BROKEN, BUT THE REPAIR MAN IS TOO BUSY TO COME FIX IT...
UM... 7+4...
"...AND CAN YOU BELIEVE WE RAN OUT OF CHOPSTICKS WHEN OUR SUPPLIER IS ON VACATION?"
SO I REALLY CAN'T LEAVE...BUT EVEN IF I HAD THE TIME, I DON'T THINK I COULD COME...
"...SINCE IN THE CONFUSION I LOST MY I.D. CARD."
UM...DID I GO A LITTLE OVERBOARD?

WOW, WHAT A CATASTROPHE! AN ALIEN INVASION WOULD'VE DONE LESS DAMAGE...
...AND BEEN MORE BELIEVABLE!
TA TAP TATA TAP
YOU DON'T NEED TO JUSTIFY YOURSELF, HAY LIN! I DIDN'T MEAN TO TEAR YOU AWAY FROM YOUR BILLION DUTIES... WE'LL MEET UP ANOTHER TIME!
VRRR
IT'S JUST THAT HERE IN OPEN HILL, I FEEL SO FAR FROM EVERYTHING AND EVERYONE...
I FEEL LIKE AN ISLAND LOST AMONG THE WAVES...
...AN ISLAND TOO SMALL TO GET ANYONE'S ATTENTION.

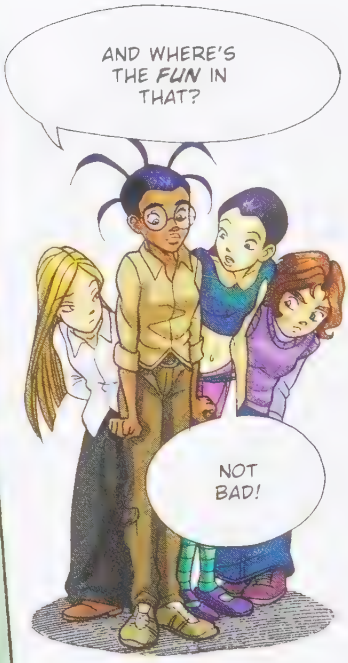
LITTLE MORE THAN A DOT ON THE OLDEST MAPS OF THE CITY...
AND HERE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE BAY IS SIREN ISLAND.
...A DOT THAT'S DISAPPEARED FROM TODAY'S MAPS OF HEATHERFIELD...
...BECAUSE THE ISLAND AND ITS LIGHTHOUSE WERE SWALLOWED BY THE SEA AT THE BEGINNING OF THE CENTURY.
I HEARD THAT TOO. GHOSTS, MONSTERS, STRANGE CREATURES...
SPEAKING OF...WHERE'S ORUBE?
BUT THE ISLAND STILL EXISTS! THEY SAY IT'S JUST A BIG ROCK, BARREN AND DESERTED.
...ENVELOPED BY SINISTER LEGENDS. OOOH!
SHE'S AT THE BOOKSHOP KEEPING AN EYE ON CEDRIC...
...IN CASE THE BOOK STARTS TALKING AGAIN.

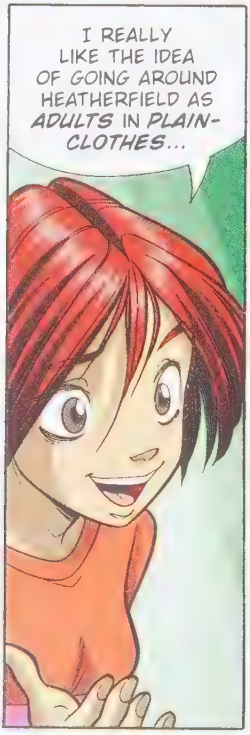
POOR WILL. WE'RE HERE CHATTING AND CALM...
...CAN'T EVEN IMAGINE HOW SHE'S GOTTA BE FEELING RIGHT NOW.
MATT'S BEEN SUCKED INTO A MYSTERIOUS BOOK IN CEDRIC'S CLUTCHES, AND WE STILL GOTTA FIND FIVE MAGIC STONES IN AS MANY PLACES...
ALL TO GET YOUR BOYFRIEND BACK...BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!
SO HERE'S THE THING.
WE GOTTA USE THIS HOLIDAY TO TRY AND RECOVER THE FIRST ELEMENT'S STONE.
WE KNOW WHERE IT IS, BUT WE STILL GOTTA FIGURE OUT A FEW THINGS, WHICH I'LL SUM UP IN ONE QUESTION...
HOW CAN FIVE UNDERAGE GIRLS TAKE A BOAT AND SAIL TO A CREEPY ISLAND... WITHOUT DRAWING SUSPICION?

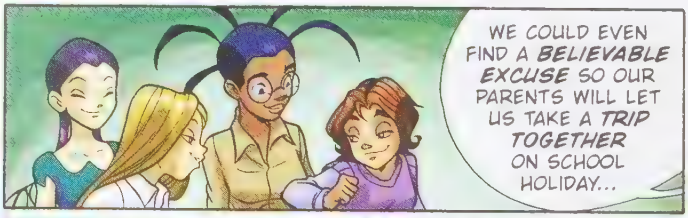

I'VE OFTEN BEEN AT THE TOURISTY END OF THE PORT WITH DAD, TO WELCOME HIS FRIENDS ARRIVING ON THEIR YACHTS...
I DIDN'T KNOW WE WERE HERE TO DISCUSS DETAILS OF YOUR LIFE AS A DIVA, CORNY!
LET HER FINISH!
I KNOW THERE'S A "WATER TAXI"... YOU JUST PAY A FEE, AND THEY'LL TAKE YOU WHEREVER YOU WANT.
WHAT IF WE POOL OUR SAVINGS TOGETHER? I'VE GOT SOME. I WANTED TO USE IT TO VISIT ERIC AT SOME POINT, BUT...
THERE'S STILL THE AGE ISSUE, HAY LIN.
AND SOMEONE MIGHT RECOGNIZE US...OUR PARENTS WOULD FIND OUT.
WHAT IF WE WORE DISGUISES?
ARE YOU SERIOUS?
IGNORE HER.
WERE YOU LAST IN LINE WHEN THEY WERE HANDING OUT BRAINS?
OOF! CORNY, SWEETIE, WE WEREN'T THAT FAR APART IN LINE!
ENOUGH, GUYS. STOP IT!

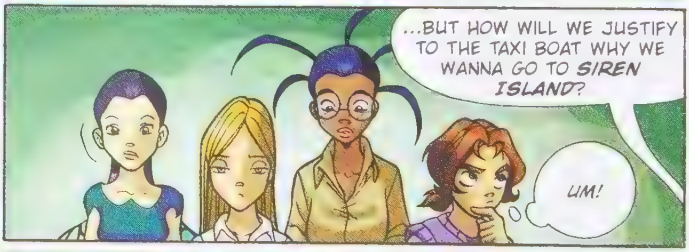
IRMA'S RIGHT!
HEAR THAT? THE VOICE OF WISDOM!
WE CAN LOOK OLDER IF WE WANT TO, BY SIMPLY DOING...
... THIS!
YOU WANNA GO AROUND TRANSFORMED AND INVISIBLE LIKE THAT TIME AT THE MARKET...
OH, NO, WILL. NOT INVISIBLE!
I COULD SEW SOME ADULT-SIZED CLOTHES FOR US... IT'LL BE COOL, LIKE MAKING THEATER COSTUMES!
?
BRILLIANT! HOW ABOUT WE RANSACK ORUBE'S WARDROBE?
I SAY IT'S THE PERFECT OCCASION FOR SOME SHOPPING!
FOR ONCE, I CAN TRULY SAY I ACTUALLY NEED NEW CLOTHES!

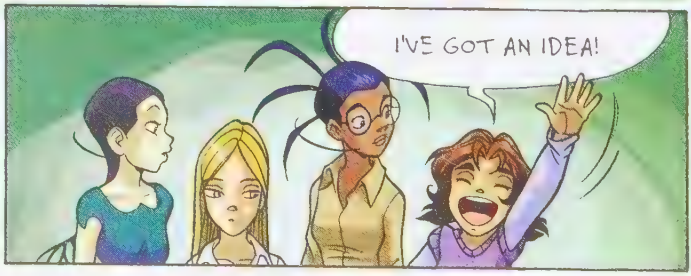
WHY BOTHER WITH ALL THAT? WE CAN USE OUR MAGIC TO DISGUISE OURSELVES!

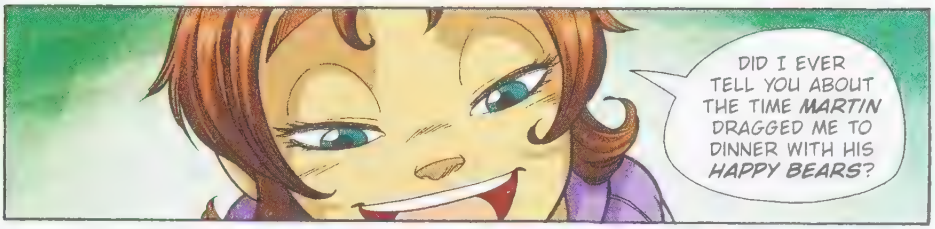

AND WHERE'S THE *FUN* IN THAT?
NOT BAD!

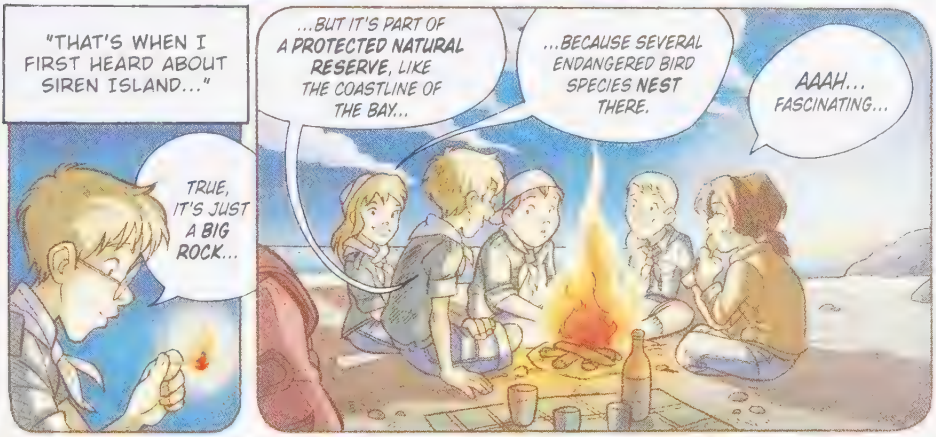

I REALLY LIKE THE IDEA OF GOING AROUND HEATHERFIELD AS *ADULTS* IN *PLAIN-CLOTHES*...

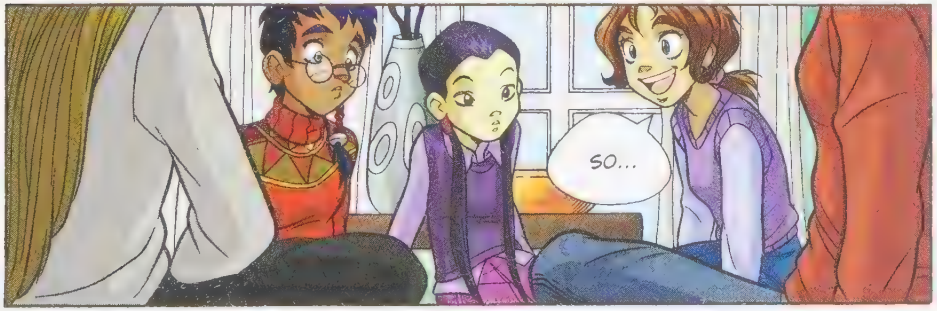

WE COULD EVEN FIND A *BELIEVABLE EXCUSE* SO OUR PARENTS WILL LET US TAKE A *TRIP TOGETHER* ON SCHOOL HOLIDAY...


...BUT HOW WILL WE JUSTIFY TO THE TAXI BOAT WHY WE WANNA GO TO *SIREN ISLAND*?
UM!


I'VE GOT AN IDEA!

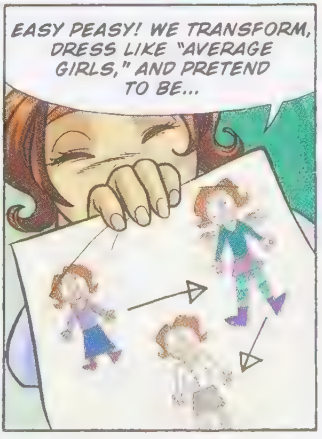

DID I EVER TELL YOU ABOUT THE TIME MARTIN DRAGGED ME TO DINNER WITH HIS HAPPY BEARS?


"THAT'S WHEN I FIRST HEARD ABOUT SIREN ISLAND..."
TRUE, IT'S JUST A BIG ROCK...
...BUT IT'S PART OF A PROTECTED NATURAL RESERVE, LIKE THE COASTLINE OF THE BAY...
...BECAUSE SEVERAL ENDANGERED BIRD SPECIES NEST THERE.
AAAH... FASCINATING...


SO...

...I THINK THIS INFORMATION GIVES US A VALID EXCUSE TO VISIT THE ISLAND WITHOUT PEOPLE BEING SUSPICIOUS.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
I DON'T GET IT.


EASY PEASY! WE TRANSFORM, DRESS LIKE "AVERAGE GIRLS," AND PRETEND TO BE...

...UNIVERSITY STUDENTS SPECIALIZING IN ORNITHOLOGY, YOU SAID?
THAT'S RIGHT. WE'RE GOING TO THE ISLAND TO DO SOME RESEARCH.
YOU'VE GOT GUTS! I HEARD IT'S INHABITED BY STRANGE CREATURES ...
TAXI
WE'RE NOT AFRAID OF BIRDS. WE WOULDN'T HAVE ALL THIS STUFF TO TRACK AND STUDY THEM OTHERWISE...
OH, I WASN'T TALKING ABOUT LOCAL CRITTERS...
...HAVEN'T YOU HEARD THE PLACE IS CURSED?
CURSED? THAT'S AWFUL!
IRMA, CUT IT OUT!
OLD LEGENDS... FUELED BY THOMAS LOWITT'S WORKS, YOU KNOW?
THE POET?

THAT'S THE ONE! HE WAS THE CUSTODIAN OF HEATHERFIELD'S FIRST LIGHT-HOUSE, WHICH USED TO BE ON THAT ISLAND.
...WHICH WAS THEN SUBMERGED, AND THE LIGHTHOUSE WAS MOVED TO THE MAINLAND, AT LIGHTHOUSE CAPE.
YEAH...THEY SAID LOWITT WAS HIDING OUT THERE AFTER GETTING HIS HEART BROKEN...
AND... DID HE LIVE ALONE?
THE ISLAND HAS ALWAYS BEEN DESERTED AND INHOSPITABLE... BUT IN HIS WORKS, LOWITT TALKED ABOUT FASCINATING CREATURES THAT KEPT HIM COMPANY.
STRAP
CREATURES WITH ENCHANTING, MELODIOUS VOICES!
URGH!
!!
YOU OKAY BACK THERE?
YES, THANKS. MY FRIEND WAS FEELING A LITTLE SEASICK, BUT SHE'S GOOD NOW...
I bet you don't get AIRSICK at all, huh?
HANG ON. WE'RE ALMOST THERE...

...AND THE ISLAND ITSELF IS LETTING US KNOW.
WOW! THE WEATHER'S CHANGING...
YEAH... UH...BETTER WEAR SOMETHING WARMER!
THIS ISN'T ACTUALLY A NORMAL WEATHER PATTERN.
?
THEY SAY THE ISLAND DOES THIS TO HIDE FROM THE WORLD...AND SOME CLAIM IT'S HIDING TERRIFYING SECRETS IN ITS FOG.
I'VE NEVER BELIEVED IN THE SUPER-NATURAL...
...BUT I CAN ASSURE YOU, YOU CAN NEVER SEE A THING WHEN YOU GET CLOSE TO THAT ISLAND.

UNFORTUNATELY, I CAN'T WAIT FOR YOU. I GOT WORK TO DO, AND YOU SAID YOU'LL BE HERE FOR A FEW HOURS.
HERE. CALL MY CELL WHEN YOU NEED TO COME BACK.
TAXI 275 TEL 5458685
THANKS FOR THE LIFT...
...AND FOR THE STORIES!
BRRR! THIS PLACE GIVES ME THE CREEPS.
I CAN'T SEE A THING.
MAYBE BECAUSE THERE'S NOTHING TO SEE.
WHAT NOW?
I SUGGEST WE SPLIT UP...
...TO MAKE THE MOST OF OUR TIME AND EXPLORE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE.
BETTER TO STAY IN DISGUISE... IN CASE WE MEET SOMEONE ON THE ISLAND.
RIGHT. AND LET'S KEEP IN TOUCH TELEPATHICALLY, IN CASE ANYONE NEEDS...

...HELP!
THIS ABSURD PLACE SEEMS TO EXPAND WITH EVERY STEP I TAKE...IT'S ENDLESS.
AND TO THINK ON THE OLD MAPS IT'S JUST A SMALL DOT.
A DOT THAT MARKS A WHOLE LOT OF NOTHING!
MATT. WITHIN THE BOOK. REMOVED FROM TIME.
WILL I EVER GET OUT OF HERE?
WILL I EVER FIND THE END?
WILL. WITHIN TIME. REMOVED FROM THE WORLD.

WHERE ARE YOU, WILL?
I'M... I'M COMING, MATT.
DON'T BE AFRAID...
YOU'RE MY ONLY HOPE...
I'LL GET YOU OUT OF THERE!
SO INTENSELY CLOSE.
I'M WAITING...
YET SO FAR AWAY.

Witch
Will
Irma
Taranee
Cornelia
Hay Lin

OKAY, I'LL ADMIT IT. I DIDN'T DO IT JUST TO LOOK LIKE THE PERFECT STUDENT...
LET'S JUST SAY I FOLLOWED MY INSTINCT...MAYBE THE SAME INSTINCT NOW LEADING ME BEHIND THOSE ROCKS...
...AND THAT INSTINCT WAS SAYING "DON'T FORGET YOUR TRUSTY CAMERA!"
IRMA SAID RARE BIRDS COME TO NEST ON THE ISLAND, AND MAYBE I'LL ACTUALLY GET THE CHANCE...
...TO SNAP A FEW GOOD PICS!
CLICK
HUH?

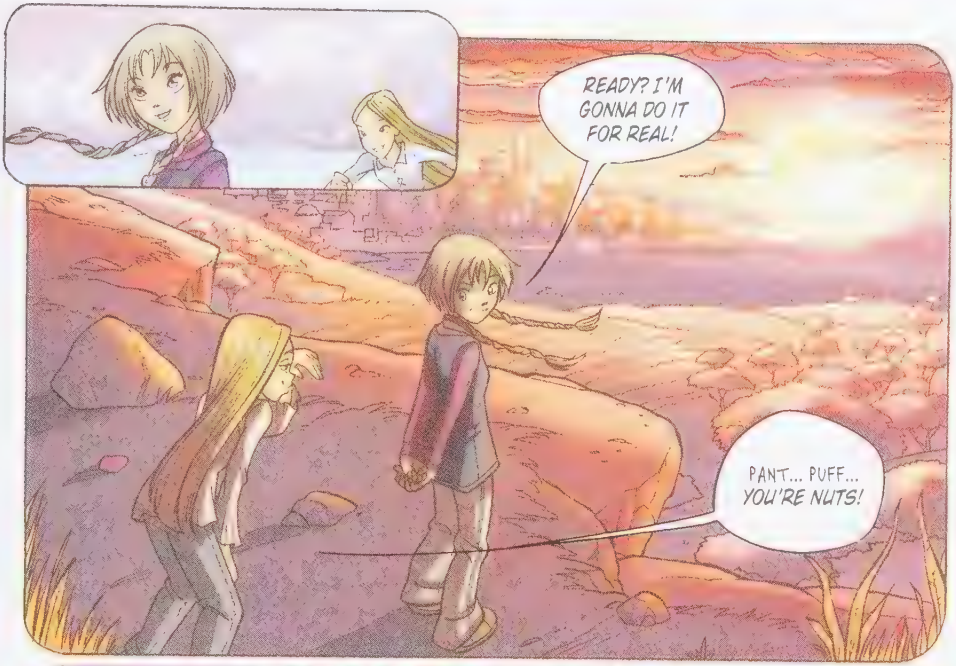
WOW...
CLICK
!!
?
HEY, AREN'T YOU...?
KONRAD MORODER, WILDLIFE PHOTO-GRAPHER...

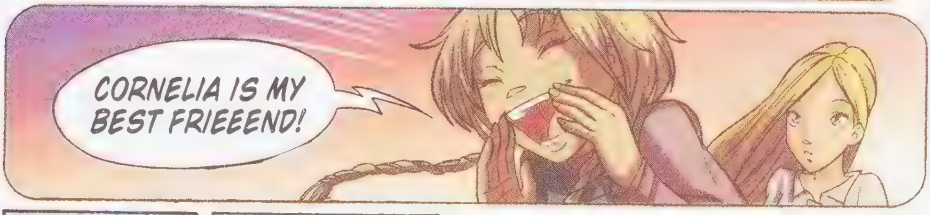
...AND YOU ALMOST RUINED THE BEST PHOTO OF THE WHOLE SHOOT!
EHM, SORRY! I DIDN'T MEAN TO INTRUDE. I THOUGHT YOU WERE SOMEONE ELSE!
THAT GRUMPY ATTITUDE, HIS POSTURE...
"...HE'S JUST LIKE MR. WALLACE, THE OWNER OF THE CAMERA SHOP. THE ONE WHO PASSED ON HIS PASSION TO ME!"
WELL, WOULD YOU MIND LETTING ME WORK NOW?
OF COURSE. I'M SORRY. THIS PLACE IS LOVELY!
WHO'D HAVE THOUGHT THAT THE FOG AND ROCKS WERE HIDING ALL THIS?
OFTEN, THINGS ARE RIGHT IN FRONT OF OUR EYES, BUT WE DON'T SEE THEM...
...BECAUSE WE CAN'T FOCUS ON THEM!
!!

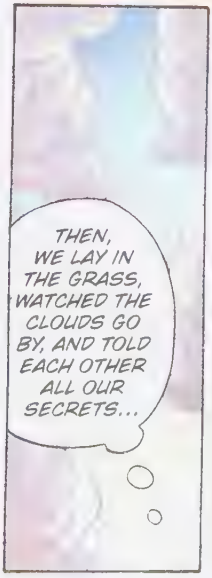
IN OTHER WORDS, BETTER TO PROPERLY FOCUS THE EQUIPMENT, LIKE A TRUE PROFES-SIONAL!
SO COOL...
!!
I GET THE MESSAGE... I'M IN THE WAY! AFTER ALL, HE'S WORKING, AND I'VE GOT STUFF TO DO TOO. BUT SO WHAT IF I HANG AROUND A BIT LONGER? IT'S NOT EVERY DAY I GET TO WATCH SOMETHING SO FASCINATING!
ONE LAST SHOT... JUST ONE MORE, AND I'LL GO...

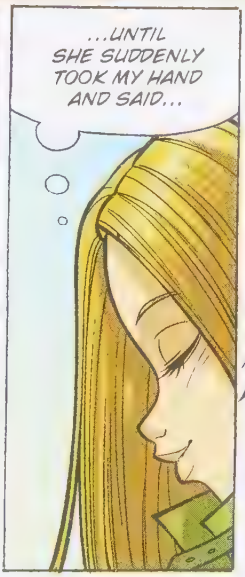
HEY, BUT YOU...
HI! DO I KNOW YOU?
TH-THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE. APART FROM THE HAIR, THIS GIRL LOOKS EXACTLY LIKE...
NICE TO MEET YOU. I'M ROSE! I DON'T THINK I'VE EVER SEEN YOU AROUND HERE...

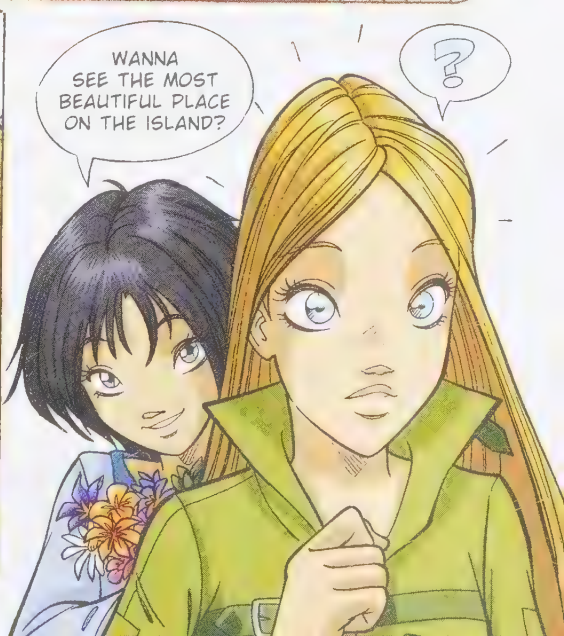
N-NO, I'M JUST VISITING...
WELL, THEN YOU ARRIVED RIGHT ON TIME!
WANNA HELP ME PICK SOME FLOWERS FOR MY MOM?
NO, CORNELIA, SHE'S NOT ELYON! HOW COULD YOU EVEN THINK THAT?
IT'S HER BIRTHDAY TODAY, AND MY BROTHERS AND I WANNA SURPRISE HER.
YET THE WAY SHE MOVES...THE LIGHT IN HER EYES... REMIND ME OF HER...
"...OF THE TIME WE SPENT TOGETHER WHEN SHE STILL LIVED IN HEATHERFIELD AND WE SAID WE WERE..."
BEST FRIENDS!
YOU BET!
YES! I WANNA SHOUT IT FROM THE ROOFTOPS!
WHERE YA GOING?
I WANNA SHOUT IT TO ALL OF HEATHERFIELD! TO THE WHOLE WORLD!

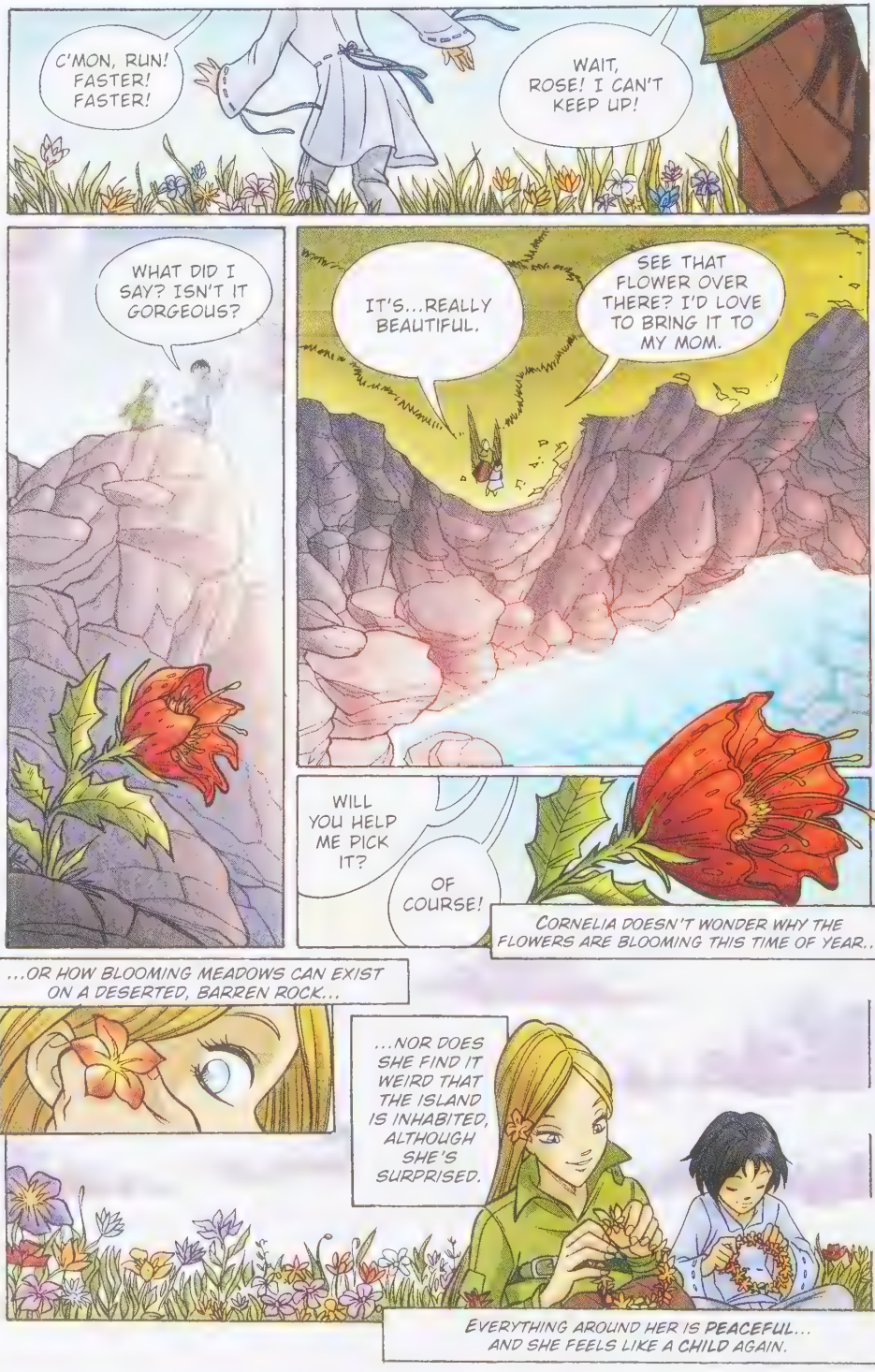

READY? I'M GONNA DO IT FOR REAL!
PANT... PUFF... YOU'RE NUTS!

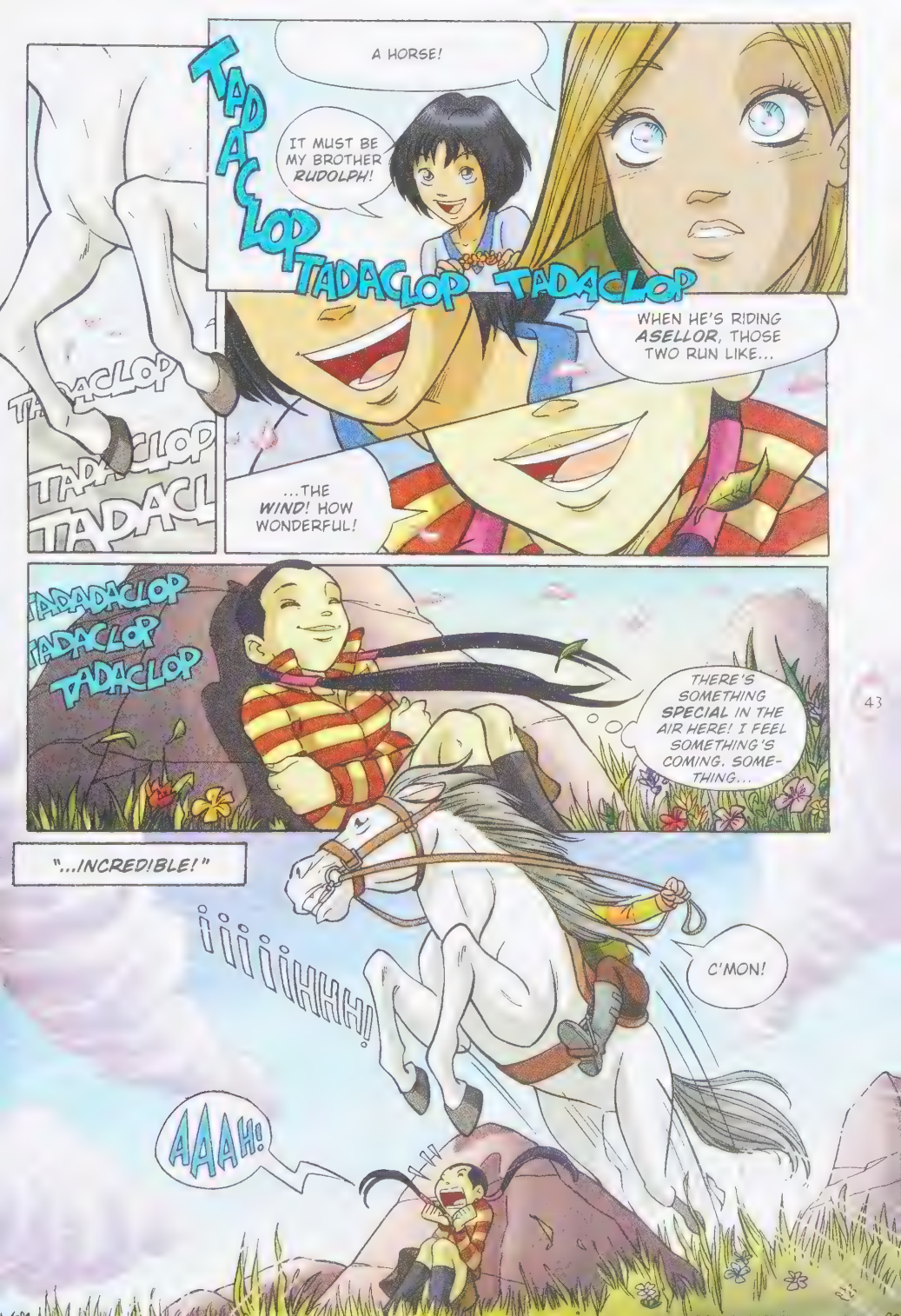

CORNELIA IS MY BEST FRIEEEND!


THEN, WE LAY IN THE GRASS, WATCHED THE CLOUDS GO BY, AND TOLD EACH OTHER ALL OUR SECRETS...


...UNTIL SHE SUDDENLY TOOK MY HAND AND SAID...


WANNA SEE THE MOST BEAUTIFUL PLACE ON THE ISLAND?
?


C'MON, RUN! FASTER! FASTER!
WAIT, ROSE! I CAN'T KEEP UP!
WHAT DID I SAY? ISN'T IT GORGEOUS?
IT'S...REALLY BEAUTIFUL.
SEE THAT FLOWER OVER THERE? I'D LOVE TO BRING IT TO MY MOM.
WILL YOU HELP ME PICK IT?
OF COURSE!
CORNELIA DOESN'T WONDER WHY THE FLOWERS ARE BLOOMING THIS TIME OF YEAR...
...OR HOW BLOOMING MEADOWS CAN EXIST ON A DESERTED, BARREN ROCK...
...NOR DOES SHE FIND IT WEIRD THAT THE ISLAND IS INHABITED, ALTHOUGH SHE'S SURPRISED.
EVERYTHING AROUND HER IS PEACEFUL... AND SHE FEELS LIKE A CHILD AGAIN.


A HORSE!
IT MUST BE MY BROTHER RUDOLPH!
TADACLOP TADACLOP TADACLOP
WHEN HE'S RIDING ASELLOR, THOSE TWO RUN LIKE...
...THE WIND! HOW WONDERFUL!
TADADACLOP TADACLOP TADACLOP
THERE'S SOMETHING SPECIAL IN THE AIR HERE! I FEEL SOMETHING'S COMING. SOMETHING...
"...INCREDIBLE!"
iiiiiHHH!
C'MON!
AAAH!

HEY, ARE YOU OKAY?
I DON'T THINK ANYTHING'S BROKEN...
!!
ARE YOU SURE?
PFFRRR
ANYTHING I CAN DO?
OH! THIS GUY LOOKS JUST LIKE ERIC!
AND... WHAT JUST HAPPENED IS EXACTLY...
"...HOW WE MET!"
YOU OKAY?
I DON'T THINK ANYTHING'S BROKEN...
ARE YOU SURE? ANYTHING I CAN DO?

NO, REALLY... I'M OKAY!
I-I'M FINE... REALLY!
GOOD...
THAT COULD'VE ENDED BADLY!
HEY, YOU MUST BE MAGICAL! YOU READ MY MIND.
BUT HOW COULD YOU...READ MY MEMORIES?
I KNOW BY HEART WHAT ERIC SAID WHEN WE FIRST MET...AND YOU REPEATED IT WORD FOR WORD! WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

MAYBE I'M JUST LOSING MY MIND. IT'S GONNA SEEM STUPID, BUT I HAVE TO ASK!
E-ERIC WHO?
IS IT DÉJÀ VU? OR DO YOU REALLY HAVE SOME-THING TO DO WITH ERIC?
Y-YOU... YOU'RE NOT ERIC, ARE YOU?
SORRY...
SORRY! SORRY! SORRY!
NO WORRIES! I GET PEOPLE MUDDLED UP TOO.
WHAT KIND OF IDIOT AM I? HE'S NOT ERIC LYNDON. HE'S...
MY NAME'S RUDOLPH. RUDOLPH LOWITT!
LOWITT... LIKE THE POET?
RUDY TO MY FRIENDS...

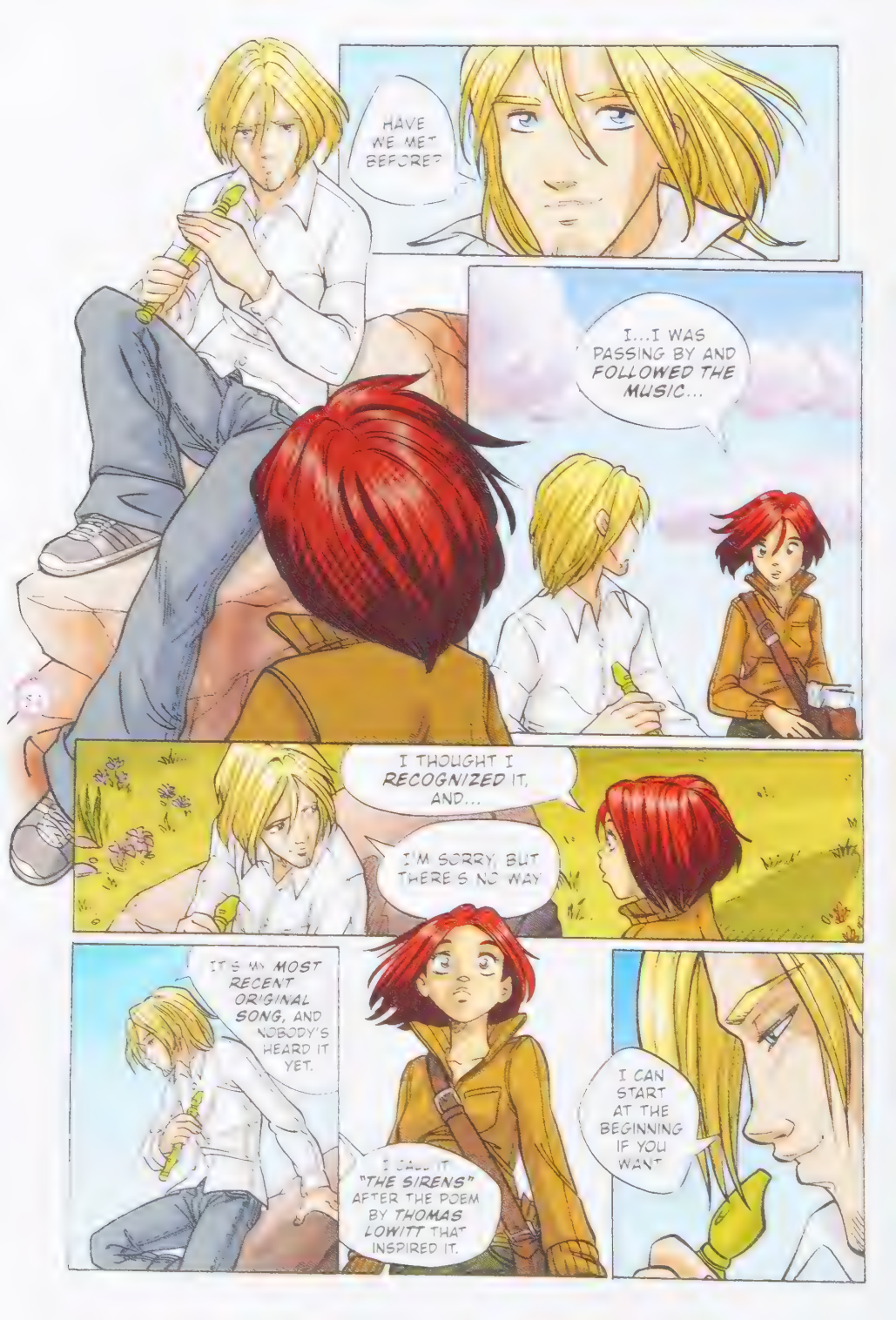
SPOT ON! HE WAS OUR ANCESTOR. MINE, MY BROTHER ANTHONY'S AND MY SISTER ROSE'S, I MEAN.
WE LIVE ON THE ISLAND WITH OUR MOTHER. WE'RE FISHERMEN, BUT WE ALSO HAVE A SMALL FARM, Y'KNOW?
SO, THE ISLAND ISN'T UNINHABITED! MAYBE I SHOULD TELL EVERYONE RIGHT AWAY... BUT WHAT'S THE HARM IN WAITING A LITTLE?
I JUST WANNA KEEP ENJOYING HIS SMILE. IT'S SO MUCH LIKE ERIC'S...
WE LIVE DAY TO DAY OFF THE FRUITS OF THE EARTH AND THE SEA. I KNOW IT DOESN'T SOUND LIKE MUCH...
ON THE CONTRARY, IT'S REALLY FASCINATING! BUT I WAS WONDERING...
WHAT?
DON'T YOU GET A LITTLE LONELY?
LONELY? YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW MANY PEOPLE COME TO THE ISLAND AND END UP NEVER LEAVING!
?
WHAT'S WEIRD ABOUT THAT? DON'T YOU AGREE THERE'S SOMETHING SPECIAL ABOUT THIS PLACE?
THE AIR IS UNIQUE...IT SMELLS OF FREEDOM!

SNIFF SNIFF
THIS SMELL REMINDS ME OF SOMETHING...
MMH... HONEY... CINNAMON... AND A TOUCH OF ICING!
MY SPECIAL CAKE! THE ONE MOM MADE FOR ME WHEN I WAS LITTLE!
WHAT A COINCIDENCE. BEFORE I LEFT THIS MORNING, DAD BROUGHT HER UP TOO!
HE REMINDED ME THAT TODAY WOULD'VE BEEN HER BIRTHDAY!

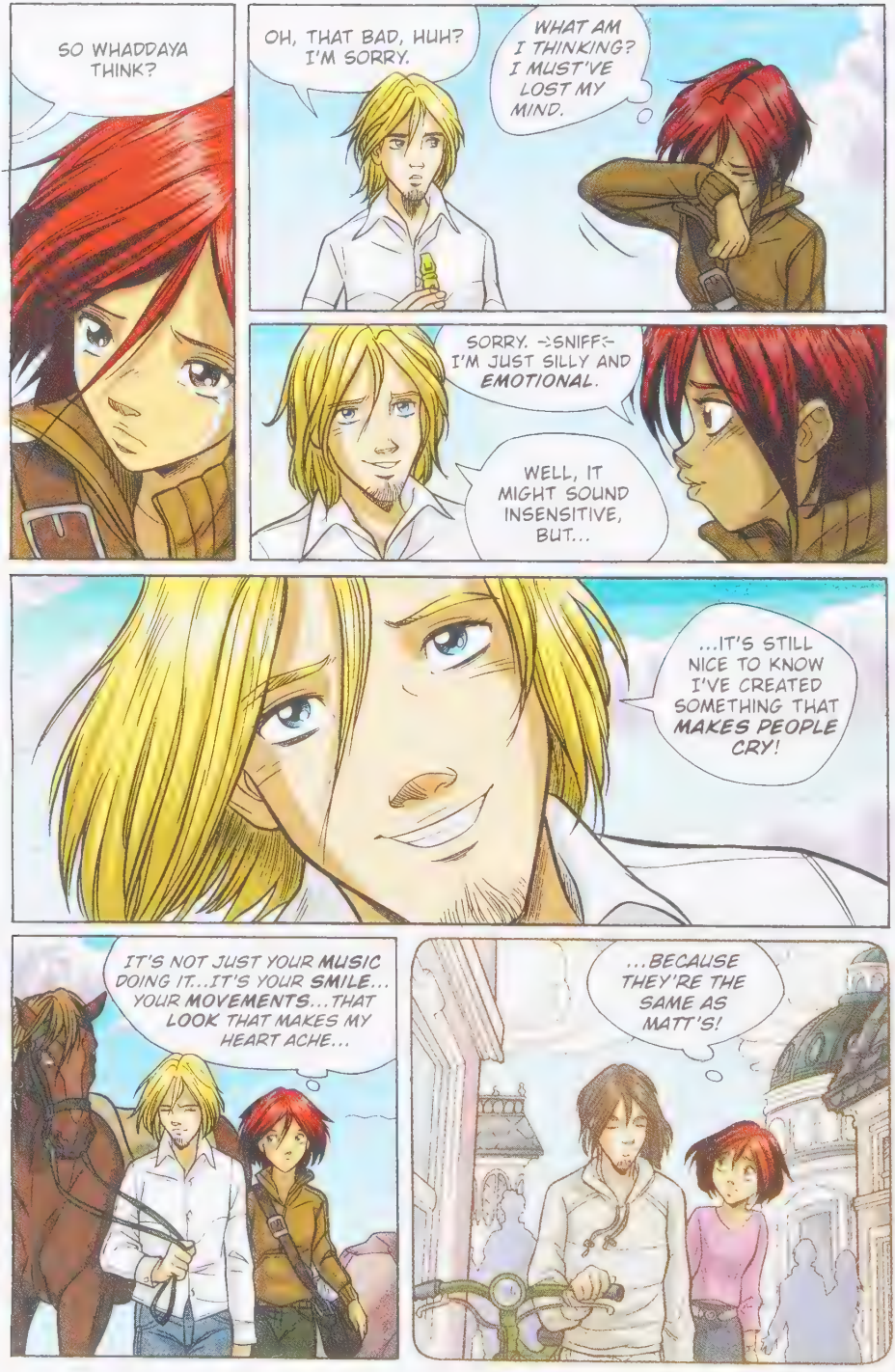
IT'S COMING FROM THERE... THE SMELL THAT REMINDS ME OF MY MOM!
CAN'T BELIEVE I BARELY GOT TO KNOW HER.
I CAN'T REMEMBER HER FACE OR HER VOICE.
...BUT IN MY MEMORIES, SHE'S LINKED WITH THIS DELICIOUS SCENT!
I ONLY KNOW ABOUT HER THROUGH PHOTOS OR DAD'S STORIES...
"DAD SAYS IT WAS MY FAVORITE TREAT AND I ASKED FOR IT ALL THE TIME. SO MOM MADE IT FOR ME, WITH A HUGE GLASS OF MILK!"
HEH-HEH!

SPEAKING OF WHICH...MY REFINED NOSE TELLS ME THE CAKE'S FRESH OUT OF THE OVEN...
...AND MY EMPTY STOMACH WANTS A TASTE!
YUM! THERE IT IS. AWESOME!
I'M REALLY CURIOUS JUST WHO THIS COOK IS.
C'MON! LOOK OVER HERE...
WHOOPS!

HI, BABY. I WAS WAITING FOR YOU. ARE YOU HUNGRY?
?
♫ LA-LA-LA... ♪
WHAT A SWEET VOICE SHE HAS. MAYBE I SHOULD TELL HER I'M NOT WHO SHE WAS WAITING FOR...
...BUT I CAN'T HELP BUT STAY!
HERE.
A NICE GLASS OF MILK, JUST HOW YOU LIKE IT.
OH! YOU'RE NOT ROSE!
BUT YOU LOOK SO FAMILIAR...


HAVE WE MET BEFORE?
I...I WAS PASSING BY AND FOLLOWED THE MUSIC...
I THOUGHT I RECOGNIZED IT, AND...
I'M SORRY, BUT THERE'S NO WAY
IT'S MY MOST RECENT ORIGINAL SONG, AND NOBODY'S HEARD IT YET.
I CALL IT "THE SIRENS" AFTER THE POEM BY THOMAS LOWITT THAT INSPIRED IT.
I CAN START AT THE BEGINNING IF YOU WANT

HE LOOKS SO MUCH LIKE MATT IT HURTS.
AND THIS MUSIC... IT REMINDS ME OF THE SONG MATT WROTE FOR COBALT BLUE!
OR MAYBE I'M JUST IMAGINING ALL OF THIS...
WHAT IF THERE'S A CONNECTION BETWEEN THIS GUY AND MATT? WHAT IF I'VE FOUND A WAY TO REACH HIM?
WHAT IF THIS IS REALLY MATT, MAROONED ON THIS ISLAND FOR SOME REASON, SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT BECAUSE OF MAGIC, AND...HE'S FORGOTTEN ABOUT ME?


SO WHADDAYA THINK?
OH, THAT BAD, HUH? I'M SORRY.
WHAT AM I THINKING? I MUST'VE LOST MY MIND.
SORRY. -SNIFF- I'M JUST SILLY AND EMOTIONAL.
WELL, IT MIGHT SOUND INSENSITIVE, BUT...
...IT'S STILL NICE TO KNOW I'VE CREATED SOMETHING THAT MAKES PEOPLE CRY!
IT'S NOT JUST YOUR MUSIC DOING IT...IT'S YOUR SMILE... YOUR MOVEMENTS...THAT LOOK THAT MAKES MY HEART ACHE...
...BECAUSE THEY'RE THE SAME AS MATT'S!

OH... I HAVEN'T INTRODUCED MYSELF YET.
ANTHONY LOWITT, GREAT-GRANDSON OF THE FAMOUS POET.
A-ANTHONY...
BLINK
AFTER ALL, LIVING ON THIS ISLAND WITH MY FAMILY IS ALL BECAUSE OF HIM!
IT'S A WONDERFUL PLACE, DON'T YOU AGREE...
SIREN ISLAND...
...WILL?
!!

"YOU KNOW MY NAME EVEN THOUGH I HAVEN'T TOLD YOU...
"THEN IT'S WHAT I THOUGHT, WHAT I HOPED. I'VE FOUND YOU!
"I PROMISE I'LL NEVER LET ANYTHING HAPPEN TO YOU AGAIN.
"I PROMISE THAT, FROM NOW ON, WE'LL ALWAYS BE TOGETHER!"
WHOOSH
NOOO! WILL!

GOTCHA!
GNNN! THAT WAS CLOSE!
WH- WHAT...?
I SAW YOU LEAP WITH OPEN ARMS TOWARD NOTHING AND FIGURED OUT YOU WERE...
...HAVING A VISION?
EXACTLY. SAME THING HAPPENED TO ME.
"RUDY INVITED ME TO RIDE ASELLOR, BUT WHEN I REACHED OUT FOR HIS HAND...
"...HE AND HIS HORSE DISAPPEARED. I NEARLY BASHED MY HAND AGAINST A ROCK WHERE THEY'D BEEN."

YOU'RE TELLING ME THIS ISLAND...
...MAKES OUR WISHES COME TRUE!
IT READS OUR DREAMS AND MEMORIES AND BRINGS THEM TO LIFE...
...TO LAY CRUEL TRAPS FOR US!
IT MAKES YOU SO DIZZY THAT BESIDES JUST BELIEVING EVERYTHING YOU SEE...
...YOU FORGET THERE'S A REAL WORLD OUTSIDE THE MOMENT YOU'RE LIVING IN.
IRMA!
GOT YOU TOO?
YEAH... LEFT ME WITH MY JAW ON THE FLOOR AND AN EMPTY STOMACH!
IT'S HARD TO SWALLOW...
LET'S SAY IMPOSSIBLE.

THE CAKE I WANTED TURNED OUT TO BE A TRICK...BUT I SWEAR I COULD SMELL IT!
"WHEN IT WAS IN FRONT OF ME, I NOTICED THE TRAY..."
"...REFLECTED ONLY MY FACE!"
THERE WAS NO CAKE... AND A SECOND LATER, NO COTTAGE, NO MOM LOOK-ALIKE...
I GUESS NOTICING SOMETHING WEIRD BROKE THE SPELL!
BUT WHAT REALLY BUGS ME IS THAT IN THOSE MOMENTS, YOU NO LONGER EXISTED FOR ME!
I SHOULD'VE TOLD YOU WHAT WAS GOING ON...BUT IT DIDN'T EVEN CROSS MY MIND!

CHEER UP! AS YOU CAN SEE, YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE.
GUYS!
I BET TARANEE'S ABOUT TO TELL US THE SAME THING!
PUFF! PANT! THANK GOODNESS YOU'RE HERE. SOMETHING UNBELIEVABLE HAPPENED...
60
LET ME GUESS. YOU HAD A VISION...
...SO BELIEVABLE IT MADE YOU FORGET ABOUT EVERYTHING ELSE.
IT SEEMED SO REAL, BUT IT WAS TOTAL HOGWASH!
EXACTLY! HE DOESN'T SHOW UP IN THE PHOTO! LOOK!
WHO??
HUFF! FOR A SEC, I THOUGHT YOU KNEW WHAT I WAS TALKING ABOUT!

THERE'S NOT MUCH TO EXPLAIN...
...SO AS SOON AS HE LOOKED AWAY, I SNAPPED A PICTURE OF HIM.
AND HERE'S THE RESULT!
HUH! WHAT A HANDSOME GUY!
I DON'T SEE ANYONE...
LACK OF IMAGINATION, VANDOM!
THE TRUTH IS, KONRAD MORODER WAS NEVER THERE.
GOOD THING I NOTICED, OR I WOULD'VE KEPT FOLLOWING HIM ALL OVER THE PLACE!
I WAS PRACTICALLY... HYPNOTIZED. I COULDN'T THINK ABOUT ANYTHING ELSE, YOU KNOW?
ABSOLUTELY, TARANEE.
AND I ALSO KNOW THAT IF CORNELIA HASN'T SHOWED UP YET, IT'S BECAUSE SHE'S PROBABLY...

"...STILL CAUGHT IN A SIMILAR ILLUSION!"
...CONTACT HER TELEPATHICALLY! ALL TOGETHER!
...HARDER THAN I THOUGHT...COME ON, YOU CAN'T DISAPPOINT YOUR FRIEND ROSE...
THAT ONE OVER THERE?
YEAH. THINK YOU CAN GET IT?
WELL, IT WON'T BE EASY, BUT I CAN TRY TO...
YOU SURE, WILL? WHAT IF IT'S...
...NOW! LET'S CALL HER AS LOUDLY AS WE CAN.
CORNELIAAA!
ALMOST THERE, ROSE! DON'T MOVE. IT'S...
...DANGEROUS!

IT'S JUST AN ILLUSION!
HUH?
AAAH!
CRACK
!!
POWER OF THE EARTH !!
ZWII
ZWIIN

END OF CHAPTER 57

Illusions

"The gleam in the liquid abyss lights up the voices of the enchantresses..."

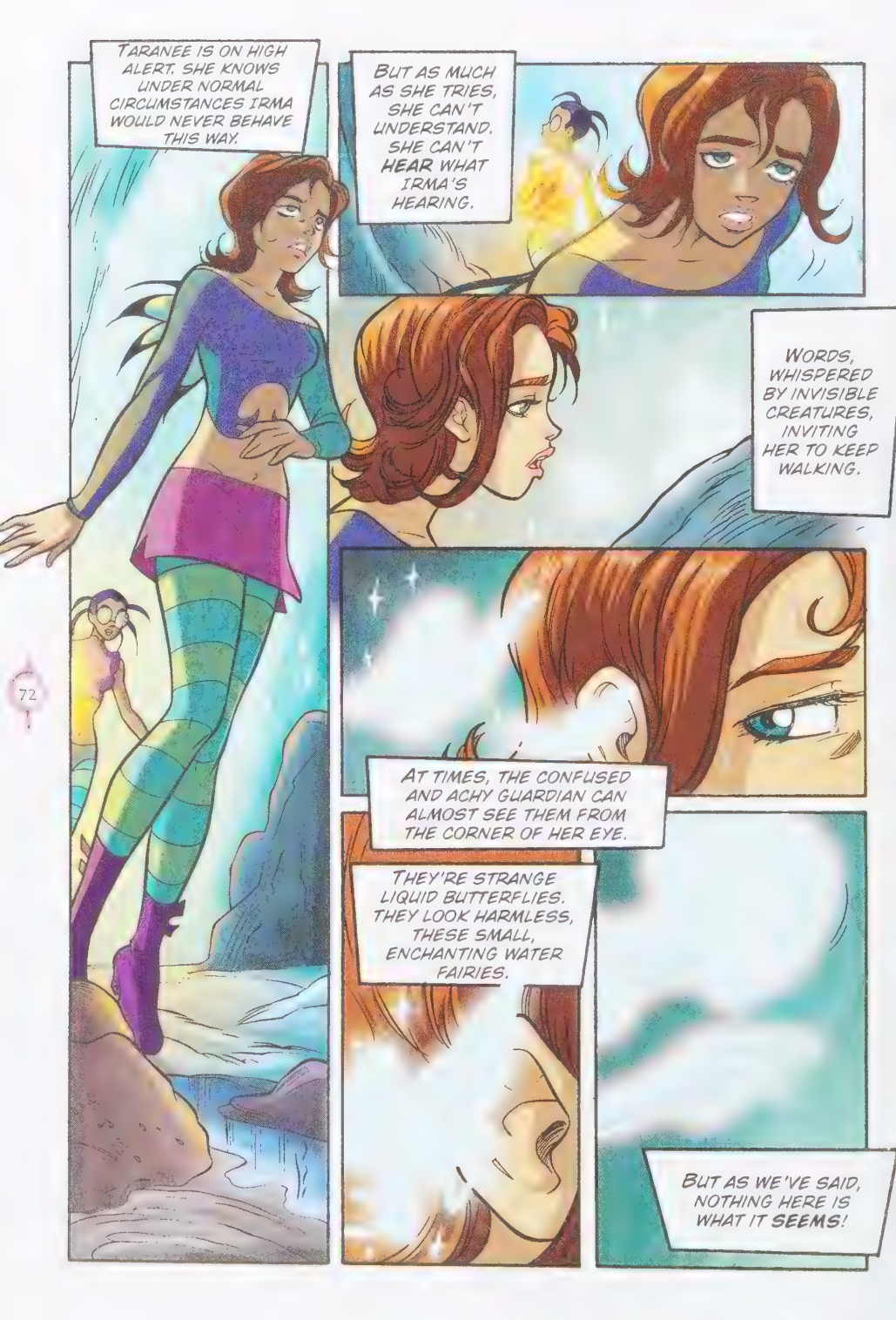
SEEN FROM HEATHERFIELD BAY, SIREN ISLAND SEEMS LITTLE MORE THAN A ROCK.
THE CAVE THAT THE GUARDIANS ARE EXPLORING SEEMS LONG AND DEEP.
SEEMS! BUT IN THIS DARK, DAMP PLACE...
...NOTHING IS WHAT IT SEEMS!
LET'S STAY CLOSE, GUYS, AND KEEP TELLING EACH OTHER WHAT WE SEE.

CORNELIA'S RIGHT. THERE'S SOMETHING HERE THAT CONJURES UP DANGEROUS HALLUCINATIONS.
DO YOU THINK LEAVING OUR CLOTHES OUTSIDE WAS SMART? I'M FREEZING !!
HEARING YOU SAY THAT IS WEIRD, TARANEE!
YOU'RE RIGHT, HAY LIN. AFTER ALL, I CAN ALWAYS HEAT THINGS UP!
LOOK. WE'RE GOING TO END UP BELOW SEA LEVEL.
IRMA, YOU HAVEN'T SAID A WORD. ARE YOU OKAY?
I'M TERRIBLE! MY HEAD'S GONNA EXPLODE, AND I FEEL LIKE I'M GONNA PUKE.
MUST BE NECK PAIN. MY MOM GETS IT WHEN SHE'S SOMEWHERE HUMID!
GREAT! THE GUARDIAN OF FIRE IS COLD, AND THE GUARDIAN OF WATER DOESN'T LIKE THE DAMP...

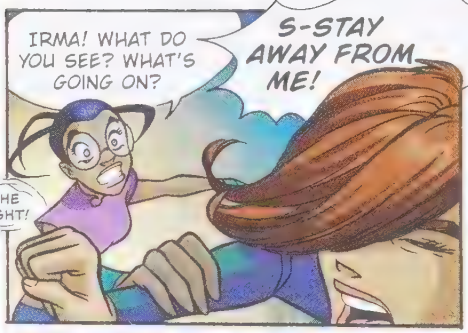
I GOTTA SIT DOWN FOR A SEC. YOU GUYS GO!
FORGET IT! WE'RE NOT LEAVING YOU ALONE. THIS PLACE IS DANGEROUS.
I'LL STAY WITH HER AND KEEP HER WARM. WE'LL JOIN YOU AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
HMM... OKAY. BUT IF WE DON'T SEE YOU IN TEN MINUTES, WE'RE COMING BACK.
WE'LL KEEP IN TOUCH TELEPATHICALLY.
SO... FINALLY ALONE!
YEAH...
...BUT MAYBE YOU'D PREFER IT WAS NIGEL INSTEAD OF ME. OR MAYBE LUKE! RIGHT?

IRMA, WHAT ARE YOU SAYING? YOUR HEADACHE IS MAKING YOU CRANKY!
YEAH, BETTER NOT DRAG THE BOYS INTO IT.
MAYBE YOU'D PREFER SHEILA JENSEN'S COMPANY!
LEAVE HER OUT OF IT. SHE'S A FRIEND, SAME AS YOU.
NO! SHEILA IS THE FRIEND. YOU CHOSE HER OVER HELPING ME STUDY!
IRMA! THIS ISN'T THE TIME TO...
HANG ON! WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
I'M JOINING THE OTHERS. I'M MUCH BETTER NOW.
NO, YOU'RE WORSE! YOU'RE ALL WEIRD AND IRRITABLE...
THAT'S RIGHT. SO MAYBE STAY AWAY FROM ME!

OH NO, THE PATH SPLITS!
WHAT? WHY DIDN'T THE GIRLS TELL US?
I CAN'T CONTACT THEM TELEPATHI-CALLY.
LET'S TAKE THE RIGHT. I HEAR VOICES.
WHAT KIND OF VOICES?
WHAT? NOW YOU DON'T TRUST ME?
I DIDN'T SAY THAT! IT'S JUST....
ONCE, YOU'D HAVE FOLLOWED ME WITHOUT HESITATION.
BUT CLEARLY THINGS HAVE CHANGED!


TARANEE IS ON HIGH ALERT. SHE KNOWS UNDER NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES IRMA WOULD NEVER BEHAVE THIS WAY.
BUT AS MUCH AS SHE TRIES, SHE CAN'T UNDERSTAND. SHE CAN'T HEAR WHAT IRMA'S HEARING.
WORDS, WHISPERED BY INVISIBLE CREATURES, INVITING HER TO KEEP WALKING.
AT TIMES, THE CONFUSED AND ACHY GUARDIAN CAN ALMOST SEE THEM FROM THE CORNER OF HER EYE.
THEY'RE STRANGE LIQUID BUTTERFLIES. THEY LOOK HARMLESS, THESE SMALL, ENCHANTING WATER FAIRIES.
BUT AS WE'VE SAID, NOTHING HERE IS WHAT IT SEEMS!

TH-THE LIGHTHOUSE!
?
WHAT NOW? WHAT LIGHTHOUSE?
THE ONE THAT USED TO BE HERE. WHERE'D IT END UP?
THE SEA MUST HAVE SWALLOWED IT ALONG WITH THE ISLAND. WHY?
B-BECAUSE...
...DON'T YOU SEE THE *LIGHT* OVER THERE?
YES, THE LIGHT!
THE LIGHT!
GO TO THE LIGHT!
AAARGH!



...STAY AWAY!

SHA-WAAM

RUUMBLE
TARANEE! IRMA!
WAIT, WILL! LET'S TRY TO CONTACT THEM TELEPATHICALLY!
IT'S USELESS. THEY'RE NOT ANSWERING!
"WE SHOULDN'T HAVE LEFT THEM ALONE!"
=COUGH=
=COUGH=

IRMA!
IRMA?
SNIFF! SOB!
TARANEE, FORGIVE ME! I...
YOU WEREN'T YOURSELF. DON'T WORRY. ARE YOU OKAY?
Y-YES. THEY'RE GONE! THEY LEFT!
YOU HAD A VISION. IT'S THIS PLACE DOING IT!
IT'S TOO RISKY TO TRY TO MOVE THESE ROCKS. WE NEED HELP! I'LL GO BACK AND TRY GOING LEFT.

I'M SURE I'LL FIND THE OTHERS, BUT PROMISE ME YOU'LL SIT AND WAIT HERE!
I... OKAY.
I FEEL BETTER NOW. AND THERE'S AIR HERE... I CAN BREATHE!
GOOD. BUT DON'T GO DOWN THE TUNNEL ALONE, OKAY?
WHATEVER HAPPENS, JUST WAIT THERE!
O-OKAY. I'LL DO AS YOU SAY.
IT'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO. IRMA MUST'VE BEEN FORCED TO TAKE THE RIGHT TUNNEL.
BUT IT WAS A TRAP. THE VOICES SHE HEARD DIDN'T... AH!
MY ARM! IN THE HEAT OF THE MOMENT, I DIDN'T REALIZE HOW MUCH IT HURT.

OKAY. IT'S OKAY! BREATHE, IRMA. TARANEE'S GONNA BE RIGHT BACK
SHE'LL FOLLOW THE LIGHT!
LIGHT!
LIGHT!
THEM AGAIN! I C-CANT ESCAPE THEM. I'M GOING CRAZY!
NO! YOU'RE OKAY!
LOOK AT US!
YOU'RE... WATER FAIRIES!
WE'RE LIKE YOU!
LIKE YOU!
BUTTER-FLIES!
YES, FAIRIES!
JUST LIKE YOU!
MOTHS!

WHAT DO YOU WANT?
FOLLOW THE LIGHT!
THE LIGHT!
LIGHT!
THE LIGHT!
YES! PRETTY!
IT'S BEAUTIFUL!
IT'S WARM!
THE LIGHT!
BUT I CAN'T GO! I PROMISED TARANEE...
THINK OF THE LIGHT!
SHE'LL COME!
SOON!
YES!
THE LIGHT...

TARANEE FINDS THE OTHERS...
WITHIN
I'M AFRAID AFTER THIS MISSION YOU'LL HAVE TO SEE A DOCTOR ANYWAY.
AT LEAST NOW I CAN MOVE IT...THANKS, CORNELIA!
THANK OUR POWERS!
YOU SAID IRMA'S DOWN THIS WAY, RIGHT?
YES. SHE'S FINE BUT STUCK BEHIND A TON OF ROCKS.
THEN LET'S GO FREE HER.
WAIT. MAYBE THAT'S NOT A GOOD IDEA.
? ?
HAVE YOU LOST YOUR MIND, HAY LIN?
REMEMBER WHAT ENDARNO SAID ABOUT THE SYMBOLS WE'RE LOOKING FOR?

THE STONES OF THE ELEMENTS ARE PROTECTED BY THE ETERNAL CUSTODIANS!
FOR MATT, I'D FIGHT THE ELEMENTS THEMSELVES!
GOOD. THAT'S WHAT YOU'LL HAVE TO DO...
...BECAUSE THE CUSTODIANS' POWERS ARE THE SAME AS YOURS!
GET IT? IF WE'RE ABOUT TO FIND THE SYMBOL OF WATER...
...THAT WOULD EXPLAIN IRMA'S BEHAVIOR.
RIGHT!
SHE HAS THE POWER OF THE SYMBOL WE'RE LOOKING FOR, SO MAYBE SHE'S MORE VULNERABLE THAN THE REST OF US.

AND THAT'S A GOOD REASON TO ABANDON HER?
I DON'T WANNA ABANDON HER. I WANNA PROTECT HER.
MAYBE HAY LIN'S RIGHT. SHE'S SAFE NOW.
WE'LL GO GET HER AFTER COMPLETING THE MISSION.
NO! I DON'T LIKE IT. IRMA COULD START SEEING THINGS AGAIN AND GO TOWARD...
RUUUUMBLE
SOMETHING TELLS ME WE COULD REALLY USE IRMA NOW!
RUUUUMBLE
WHAT... ANOTHER CAVE IN?
NOT GOOD!
WOOOSHH

FLUUUSH
BUB
?
I...I CAN BREATHE!
YAY!
WE CAN'T JUST BREATHE... WE CAN TALK TOO!

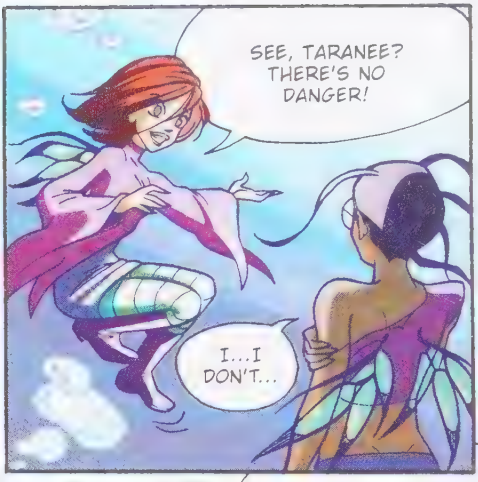
THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!
WHAT'S THE MATTER? AREN'T YOU HAPPY TO FLY UNDERWATER?
IT'S AWESOME! WONDERFUL! LOOK AT MY WINGS!
UNBELIEVABLE! WE'RE MOVING QUICKLY, LIKE BUTTERFLIES!
IT ALL SEEMS SO SIMPLE...SO NATURAL...
WHOO-HOO! HOW ABOUT THAT, HAY LIN? NOW YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN FLY!
BUT IT'S NOT NATURAL AT ALL—AND THE DON'T SEEM TO REALIZE!

STOP IT! LISTEN TO ME. WE HAVE TO FREE IRMA.
HUH?
WE JUST SAID SHE'S SAFE! LET'S TAKE THE OTHER PATH.
YEAH, LET'S GO! WE'LL GO GET HER LATER.
I DON'T THINK... OW!
SEE HOW FAST WE ARE? WE'LL COMPLETE THE MISSION IN NO TIME!
OR... IN A WING-BEAT!
THEY'RE NOT BEHAVING RATIONALLY. JUST LIKE IRMA!
THAT MEANS I CAN'T LEAVE THEM ALONE!
LOOK DOWN THE LEFT TUNNEL. DO YOU SEE IT?
THERE'S A LIGHT AT THE END!

"THE GLEAM...
"...IN THE LIQUID ABYSS...
"...LIGHTS UP THE VOICES..."
...OF THE ENCHANT-RESSES!
DIDJA SAY SOMETHING, TARANEE?

THE RIDDLE! REMEMBER IT, WILL?
OF COURSE! THE ONE THE MAGICAL BOOK KEEPING MATT PRISONER RECITED.
THANKS TO THAT RIDDLE, WE FOUND THIS!
THAT'S RIGHT. BUT WHAT IF WE INTERPRET IT ANOTHER WAY?
MAYBE THE RIDDLE WAS ABOUT THE LIGHTHOUSE! HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT THAT?
ACTUALLY, NO. HOW BEAUTIFUL IS THIS? HAVE YOU LOOKED UP?
MILLIONS OF GORGEOUS SHELLS GIVING THE ILLUSION OF A BLUE SKY!
YES, WILL. THE ILLUSION! WHAT WE'RE SEEING IS JUST AN ILLUSION!
SO DRAMATIC, TARA! YOU SURE YOU'RE OKAY?
OVER THERE, BY THE LANTERN ROOM!
IRMA!

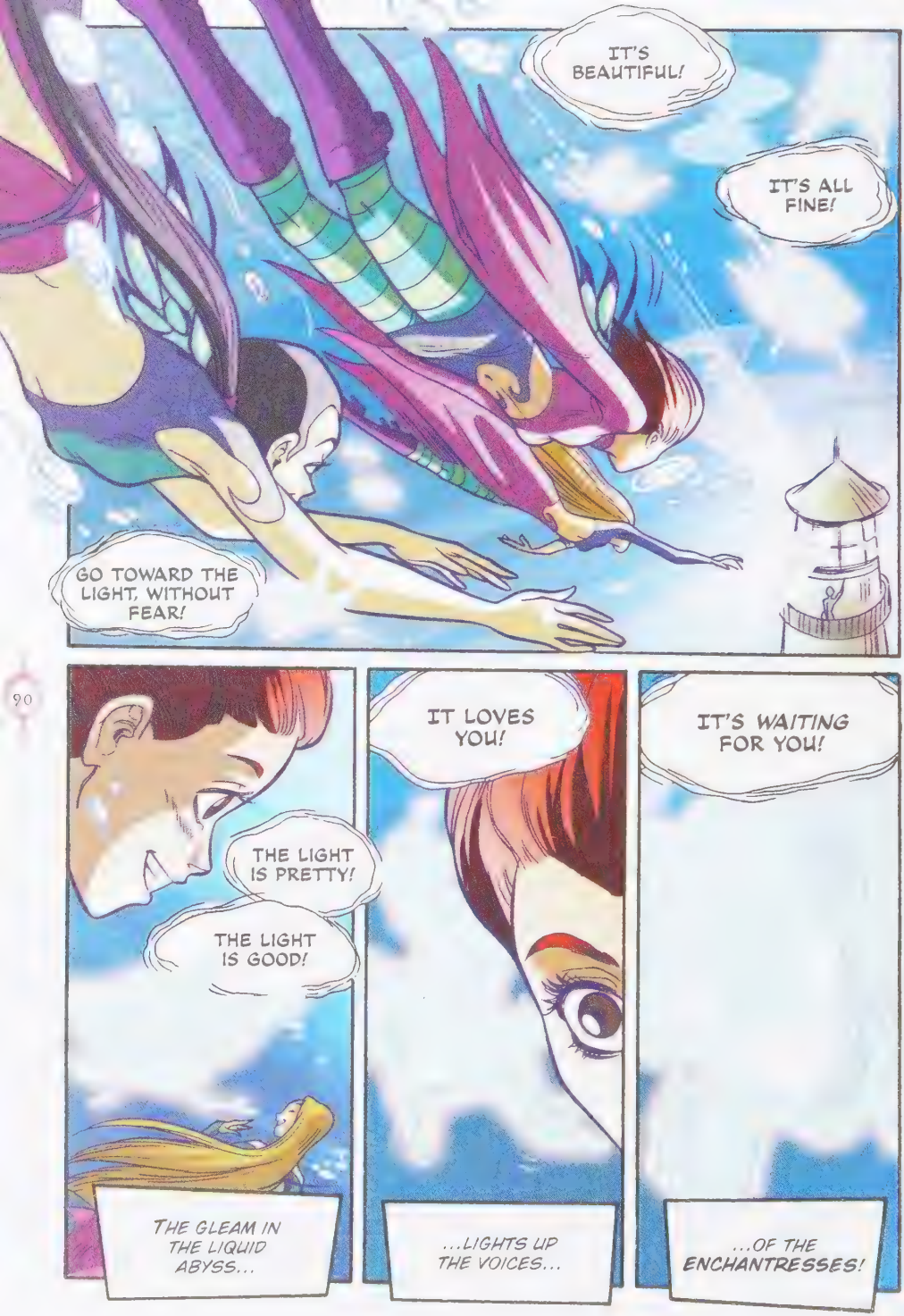
HEY! I'M HERE! I GOT OUT FROM THE OTHER TUNNEL!


SEE, TARANEE? THERE'S NO DANGER!
I...I DON'T...

TRUST WHAT YOU SEE AND FEEL! IT'S ALL REAL. I'M TOTALLY RELAXED. IRMA'S FINE!
YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WORRYING. ASK YOURSELF WHY, THEN JOIN US!
YEAH. WHY...?

MY ARM!
OF COURSE! IT STILL HURTS. THE PAIN KEEPS MY MIND GROUNDED, PREVENTING ME FROM...

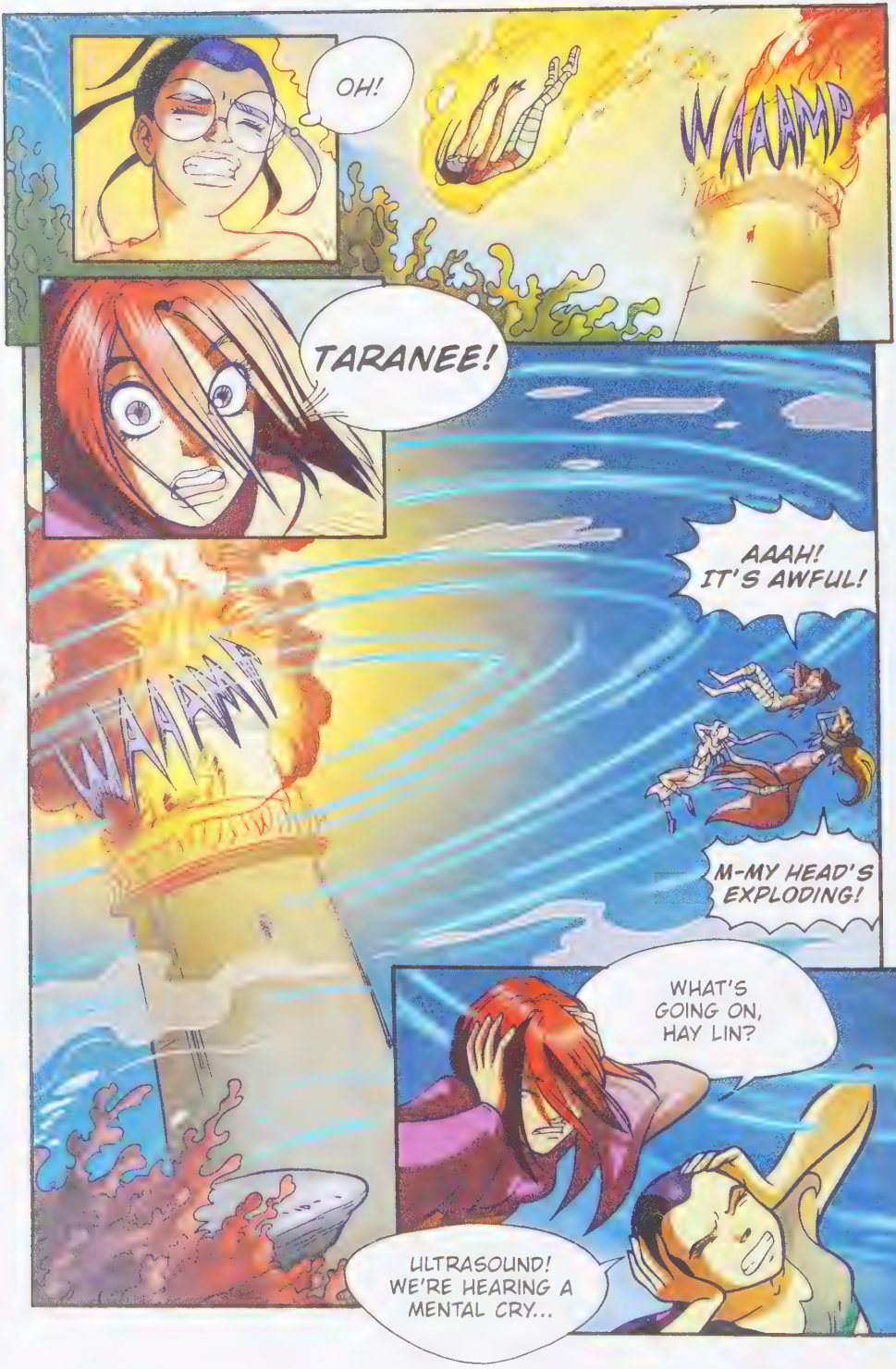
...DROPPING MY GUARD LIKE THE OTHERS HAVE. THEY'RE BEWITCHED BY WHAT THEY SEE.
I CAN SENSE WHAT THEY'RE THINKING. THEY HAVE NO DOUBTS, NO FEAR...
...WONDERFUL...
...
BEAUTIFUL
...
...NOTHING TO FEAR...
HANG ON! THESE...
...ARE NOT THEIR THOUGHTS!


IT'S BEAUTIFUL!
IT'S ALL FINE!
GO TOWARD THE LIGHT, WITHOUT FEAR!
THE LIGHT IS PRETTY!
THE LIGHT IS GOOD!
THE GLEAM IN THE LIQUID ABYSS...
IT LOVES YOU!
...LIGHTS UP THE VOICES...
IT'S WAITING FOR YOU!
...OF THE ENCHANTRESSES!

NOOOO!
WOOOOOOSH
DON'T GO NEAR IT! STAY BACK!
?
?
WOOSH
WHAT...?
UM! TARANELLY, YOU SEEM A LITTLE UPSET! EVERYTHING OKAY?
I SUGGEST YOU MOVE, IRMA!
WOOSH
WHAMP

I-IF IT'S ABOUT ME MAKING THE CAVE COLLAPSE ON YOU, I...
LISTEN TO ME, 'COS I'M NOT GONNA ASK AGAIN...
DO YOU TRUST ME?

WOOOSH
NO!
NO!
THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!
WATER CAN'T...
AAAAM
"...BURN!"


OH!
WAAAMP
TARANEE!
AAAH! IT'S AWFUL!
WAAAM
M-MY HEAD'S EXPLODING!
WHAT'S GOING ON, HAY LIN?
ULTRASOUND! WE'RE HEARING A MENTAL CRY...

SKRIIIEEEK!
...OF ANGER AND PAIN!
AND WITH THAT PAIN, THE SPELL IS BROKEN.

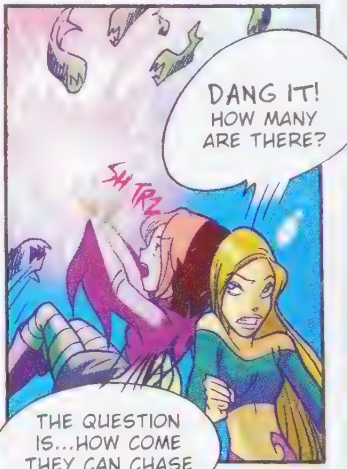
THE CREATURE STOPS SCREAMING, BUT TARANEE'S FIRE KEEPS BURNING ON ITS HEAD.
IN AN INSTANT, THE GUARDIANS REALIZE EVERYTHING THEY'VE EXPERIENCED TO THAT POINT...
...HAS JUST BEEN A CRUEL TRICK!
THE LIGHTHOUSE WAS THE ETERNAL CUSTODIAN! HOW COULD WE NOT GET IT? NOT SEE IT?
IT MANIPULATED WHAT WE SAW AND HOW WE THOUGHT!
YES. UNDER NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES, WE'D NEVER HAVE LEFT IRMA ALONE.
SPEAKING OF WHICH! WE'D BETTER GET HER AND TARANEE BEFORE THAT MONSTER RECOVERS.

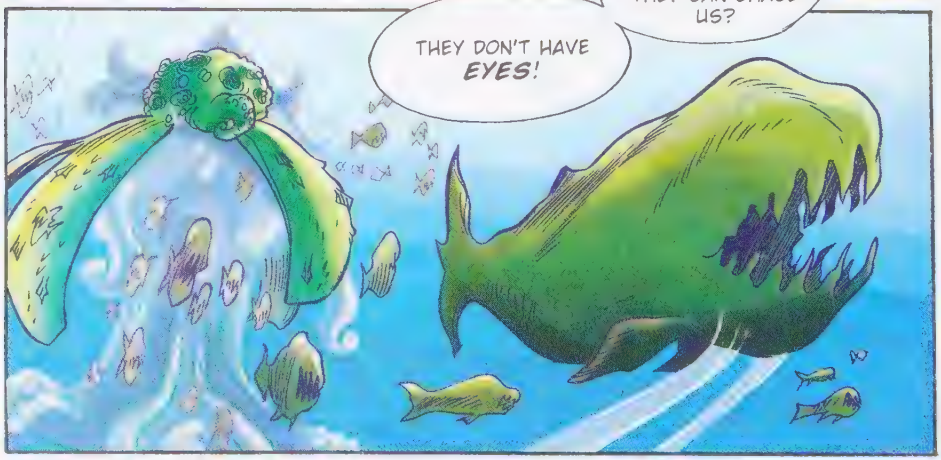
I CAN MANAGE THIS. YOU HANDLE THAT GIANT SQUID!
IRMA'S RIGHT. AFTER ALL, I THINK THAT THING WANTED TO GOBBLE US UP FOR DINNER!
WILL!
TARANEE MUST'VE USED UP ALL HER ENERGY. I...CAN'T WAKE HER UP!
DON'T WORRY, CORNELIA. SHE'LL BE FINE.
ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, WE'LL GET OUT OF HERE. AND AS A SOUVENIR...
...WE'LL BRING HOME A GIANT CUTTLEBONE!
SHAAATRZZ

SHAAATZZZ
?
GLOUB
BLOU BLOUB BLOB
UH-OH! I GUESS YOU HIT IT IN THE *WRONG PLACE*!

BLOUB BLOU BLLOB BLO
SHA
SHA
WH-WHAT...?
THERE'S NOT MUCH TO FIGURE OUT!
T-CHACK
THEY BITE! RUN!
T-CHACK
T-CHACK
SHAAH

LET'S SPLIT UP!


DANG IT! HOW MANY ARE THERE?
THE QUESTION IS...HOW COME THEY CAN CHASE US?


THEY DON'T HAVE *EYES*!

THEY'RE GONNA GET TO ME SOON, AND I STILL HAVEN'T FREED MYSELF!
DON'T DO IT!
DON'T RESIST!
US!
YES! LIKE US. LIKE ALL OF US!
YOU'RE MADE OF WATER, LIKE US!
LIKE US!
TH-THE VOICES! THOSE CREATURES! THAT MEANS...
...THE ETERNAL CUSTODIAN IS *RECOVERING*!

NO GOOD! THE MORE WE KNOCK DOWN, THE MORE APPEAR!
DON'T GIVE UP! IF WE LOWER OUR GUARD NOW, WE'RE TOAST!
SHATTR
SHATTR
WILL! LOOK AT IRMA!
OH NO!
WHY ISN'T SHE FIGHTING BACK? IT'S GOT HER TOTALLY WRAPPED UP!
MAYBE SHE'S UNDER ITS CONTROL AGAIN!
LIKE US!
YOU'RE LIKE US!
LIKE US!

I'M NOTHING LIKE YOU!
FIRST OF ALL, I'M NOWHERE NEAR THAT UGLY!
S-SECOND, I GO TO THE DENTIST... AND THIRD...
...I CAN SEE JUST FINE!
FRUUUSHH
SPLOT
SKRITTLEK!

EEEK! GROSS! GROSS! GROOOSS!
YUCK! WHAT'S SHE DOING?
SHE LET IT LIFT HER TO GET AS CLOSE AS POSSIBLE...
...TO THE CREATURE'S ONLY EYE!
BRILLIANT! WE WERE TOO FAR AWAY TO NOTICE!
THE FISH! THEY SEEM DISORIENTED. THEY'RE SWIMMING EVERY WHICH WAY.
TONK
THAT'S HOW THEY SAW US! THEY WERE CONNECTED TO THE ETERNAL CUSTODIAN.
WHOO-HOO! YOU ROCK, IRMA!
TONK

SPLASH
YAAAY!
LOOK, GUYS! LOOK WHAT I GOT...
GLOUB?
BLUB!

EVERYTHING HAPPENED— OR RATHER, DISSOLVED—IN AN INSTANT!
AS SOON AS IRMA GRABBED THE SYMBOL OF WATER...
...THE CAVE DISAPPEARED, AS DID THE FEROCIOUS FISH AND THE ETERNAL CUSTODIAN ITSELF!
THUS ENDED THE SPELL THAT ALLOWED THE GUARDIANS TO SWIM LIKE MERMAIDS...
...AND BREATHE IN THE ICY, DEEP WATERS OF HEATHER-FIELD'S SEA!
.....

?
PLOP
=SPLUT!=
=COUGH!=
YOU OKAY, CORNY?
Y-YEAH, I THINK SO!
YOU MADE AN AIR BUBBLE!
YUP! OLD TRICKS ALWAYS WORK!
I HOPE TARANEE DIDN'T DRINK TOO MUCH WATER.
SHE'S FINE. I GOT TO HER IN TIME, BUT WE GOTTA GET BACK TO THE SURFACE.
GUYS! LOOK DOWN INTO THE ABYSS!

THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED TO THE LIGHTHOUSE ON SIREN ISLAND.
SWALLOWED BY WATER...
...AND DARKNESS.

ON THE SURFACE.
?
GUYS! WHAT HAPPENED? WHY THOSE FACES?
WHERE ARE WE?
STILL ON A ROCK THAT USED TO BE AN ISLAND.
AND...THE LIGHTHOUSE?
THE ONE YOU SAW DIDN'T EXIST. IT WAS A CREATURE THAT WANTED TO EAT US.
YOU WERE RIGHT TO DOUBT WHAT YOU SAW AND HEARD. I...OWE YOU AN APOLOGY.
NO, WILL, YOU DON'T. YOU WEREN'T YOURSELF.

AND IRMA?
SHE SAVED THE DAY! SHE KNOCKED OUT OLD CYCLOPS, THE ETERNAL CUSTODIAN, ALL BY HERSELF.
CYCLOPS? YOU MEAN IT WAS HUGE?
NO! IT ONLY HAD ONE EYE, AND SHE BLINDED IT!
ACTUALLY, AFTER I SAW THE SYMBOL, I JUST TRIED TO GRAB IT.
BUT FORTUNE FAVORS THE BOLD, RIGHT?
YES, AND SHE WHO SLEEPS CAN'T CATCH FISH.
OH, TARA, I'M SO SORRY!
SO AM I!
WHEN I SHOT THAT ENERGY BEAM, I WAS HOPING TO *FRY* YOU!
?

HA-HA-HA!
SO THAT'S HOW IT IS? I'M ALL EMOTIONAL, AND WHAT DO YOU DO?
I WAS KIDDING! I WAS JUST KIDDING AND...
AH!
TAP
SORRY! OH, SORRY!
IT'S NOTHING. AND THIS TIME, I DESERVED IT!
CAN YOU GET DRESSED EVEN WITH YOUR HURT ARM?
I THINK SO. IF SOMEONE LENDS A HAND!
GOOD, BECAUSE THE TAXI BOAT IS COMING BACK, AND SOON...
Ye Olde Book Shop
"...WE'LL BE BACK HOME!"

THANK YOU! I'M FINE, REALLY!
SURE YOU DON'T WANT ANOTHER PILLOW? MAYBE TRY YOUR ARM IN ANOTHER POSITION...?
IT'S ONLY A SPRAIN, IRMA. I DON'T EVEN HAVE TO WEAR THE SLING THAT LONG.
WATER IS HELPING FIRE!
YOU'RE RIGHT, ORUBE. NOW THEY REALLY TRUST EACH OTHER.
THOSE TWO ELEMENTS COOPERATING WAS ESSENTIAL DURING THIS MISSION.
I WISH I'D BEEN THERE.
YOU KNOW THAT ONLY ELEMENTAL CREATURES LIKE US CAN RECOVER THE SYMBOLS.
ANYWAY, HOW HAVE YOU BEEN?
GOOD. BUT THE BOOK IMPRISONING MATT HASN'T SAID ANYTHING ELSE.

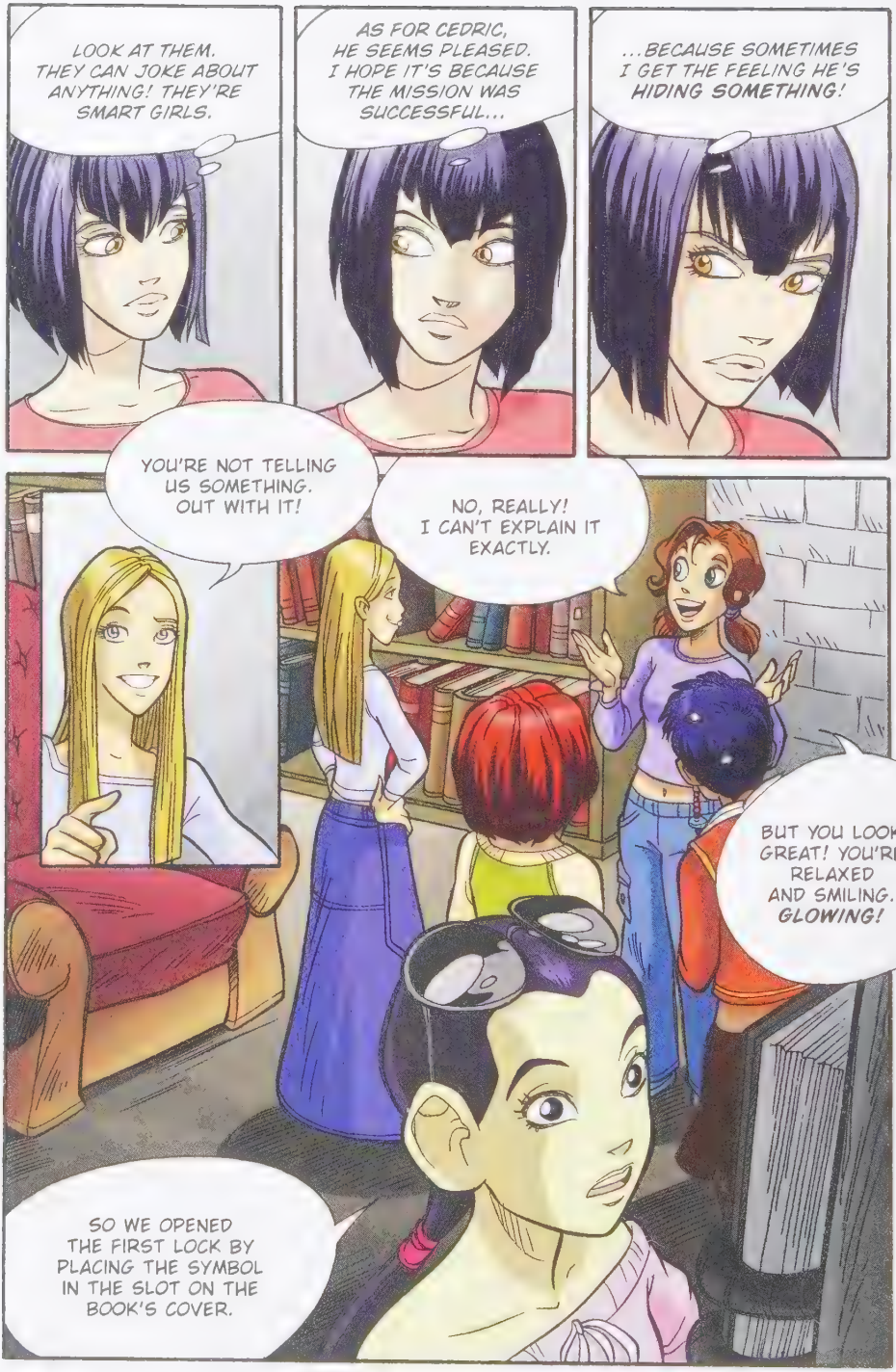
YOU SURE? CEDRIC DIDN'T ACCIDENTALLY FORGET TO MENTION IT?
THE MAGICAL BOOK DIDN'T SPEAK IN METAMOOR'S LANGUAGE OR ANY OTHER.
YOU FORGET IT'S IN MY BEST INTEREST TO TELL YOU IF IT DOES!
HMM.
BY THE WAY, MAY I SEE THE SYMBOL?
RIGHT, IRMA! SHOW IT TO US.
WHAT IF GETTING IT CLOSE TO THE BOOK CAUSES A CATAS-TROPHE?
THEN WE'LL TRANSFORM AND SORT IT OUT...
...TOGETHER, LIKE WE ALWAYS DO!

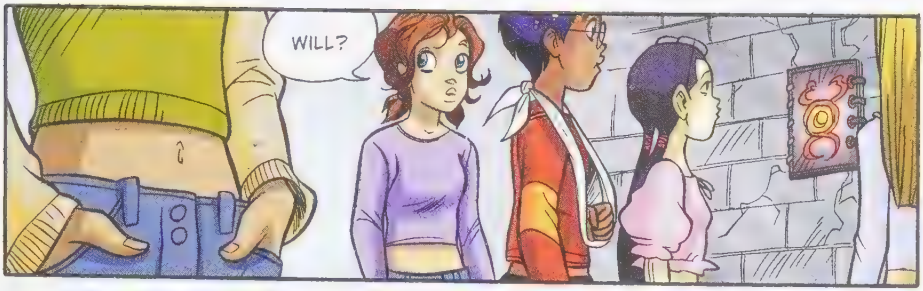
OKAY, THEN... TRUTH TIME!
WIIINN
I C-CAN'T PULL MY HAND AWAY! I...
IRMA!

TARANEE, STOP!
BUT SHE'S...
SHE'S FINE! LOOK...
...SHE'S CAUGHT IN A WAVE OF POSITIVE ENERGY!
WINNN
WIIIIINNN

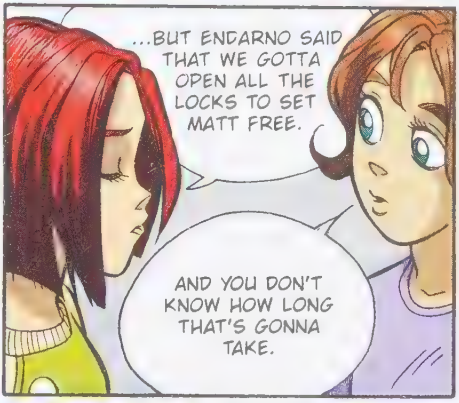
LOOK! ONE OF THE FIVE LOCKS IS OPENING!
T-CLAC
WIIIN N
OH!

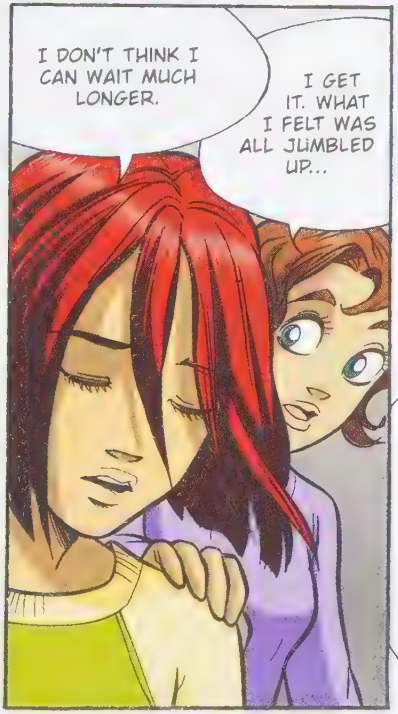
IRMA! SAY SOMETHING. ARE YOU OKAY?
I...I...
...I'VE NEVER FELT BETTER!
YOU'RE EVIL!
HA-HA-HA!
I WORRY ABOUT YOU... AND YOU GO AND DO THAT?
YOU REAP WHAT YOU SOW, MY FRYING FRIEND!

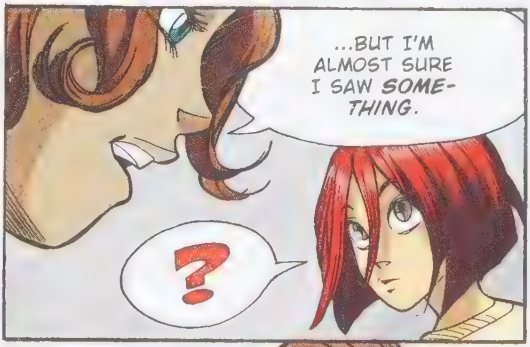

LOOK AT THEM. THEY CAN JOKE ABOUT ANYTHING! THEY'RE SMART GIRLS.
AS FOR CEDRIC, HE SEEMS PLEASED. I HOPE IT'S BECAUSE THE MISSION WAS SUCCESSFUL...
...BECAUSE SOMETIMES I GET THE FEELING HE'S HIDING SOMETHING!
YOU'RE NOT TELLING US SOMETHING. OUT WITH IT!
NO, REALLY! I CAN'T EXPLAIN IT EXACTLY.
BUT YOU LOOK GREAT! YOU'RE RELAXED AND SMILING. GLOWING!
SO WE OPENED THE FIRST LOCK BY PLACING THE SYMBOL IN THE SLOT ON THE BOOK'S COVER.


WILL?

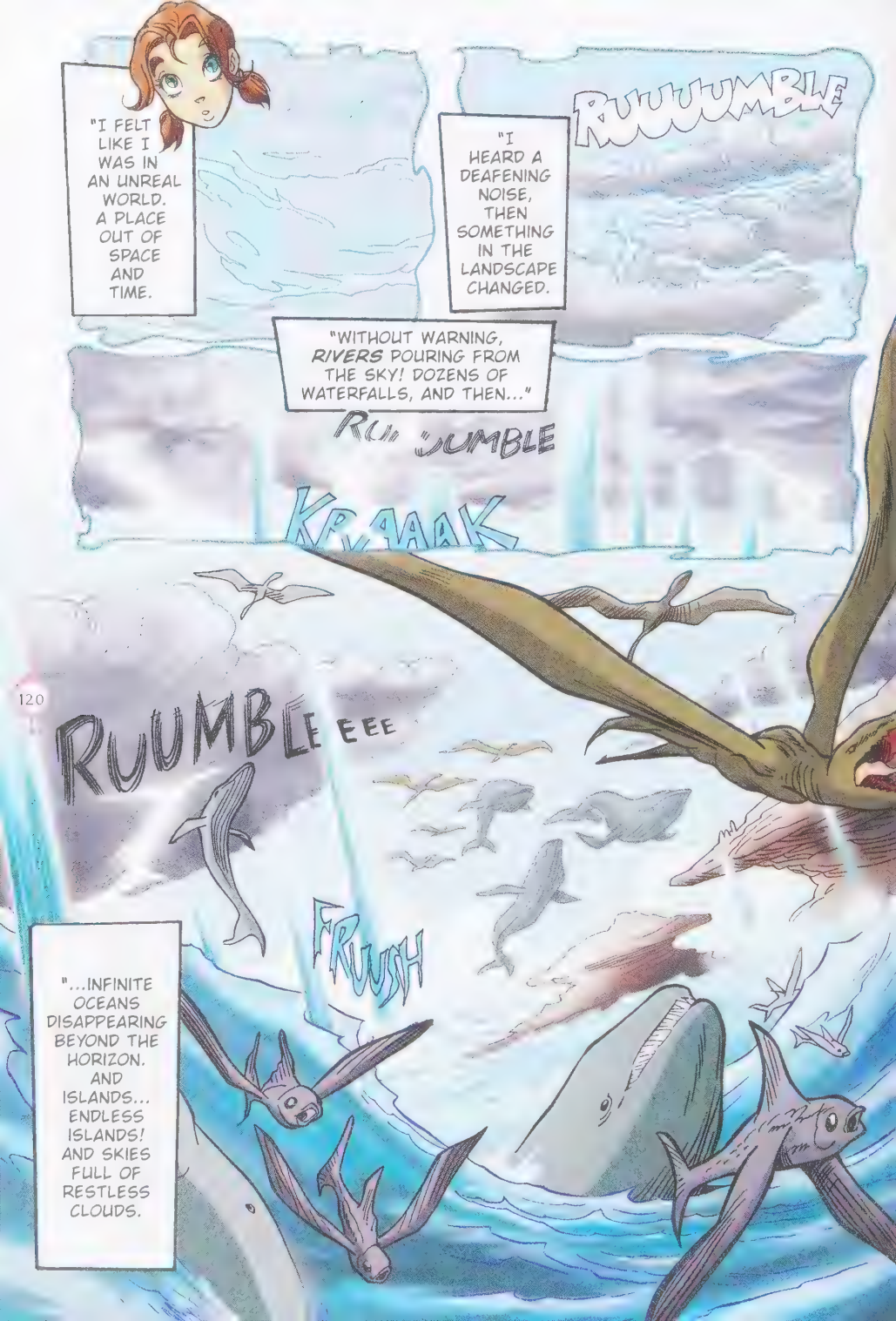
WHAT'S THE MATTER?
I'M HAPPY FOR YOU AND GLAD THE MISSION WENT WELL...


...BUT ENDARNO SAID THAT WE GOTTA OPEN ALL THE LOCKS TO SET MATT FREE.
AND YOU DON'T KNOW HOW LONG THAT'S GONNA TAKE.


I DON'T THINK I CAN WAIT MUCH LONGER.
I GET IT. WHAT I FELT WAS ALL JUMBLED UP...


...BUT I'M ALMOST SURE I SAW SOME-THING.
?

YEAH, WILL. FOR A FEW SECONDS, I THINK I WAS IN CONTACT WITH THE BOOK.


"I FELT LIKE I WAS IN AN UNREAL WORLD. A PLACE OUT OF SPACE AND TIME.
"I HEARD A DEAFENING NOISE, THEN SOMETHING IN THE LANDSCAPE CHANGED.
RUUUUMBLE
"WITHOUT WARNING, RIVERS POURING FROM THE SKY! DOZENS OF WATERFALLS, AND THEN..."
RU" "UMBLE
KRAAAK
RUUMBLE EEE
FRUUSH
"...INFINITE OCEANS DISAPPEARING BEYOND THE HORIZON. AND ISLANDS... ENDLESS ISLANDS! AND SKIES FULL OF RESTLESS CLOUDS.

"IT DIDN'T SCARE ME. ACTUALLY, IT FILLED ME WITH INCREDIBLE JOY. AT LEAST UNTIL I NOTICED...
"...THAT THE JOY I FELT WASN'T MINE!"
HA-HA-HA!
THE SEA BREEZE! THE COOL WATER ON MY FACE AFTER A LIFETIME OF NOTHINGNESS...
YES! YES! BEAUTIFUL!
WILL! CAN YOU HEAR ME?
...I FEEL REBORN! YES! AND I KNOW IT WAS YOU. IT HAS TO BE YOU!

I TOLD YOU ONCE, AND I'LL NEVER GET TIRED OF SAYING IT!
...I LOVE YOU, WILL VANDOM! YOU HEAR ME?
I...
...LOVE...
RUUUMBLE

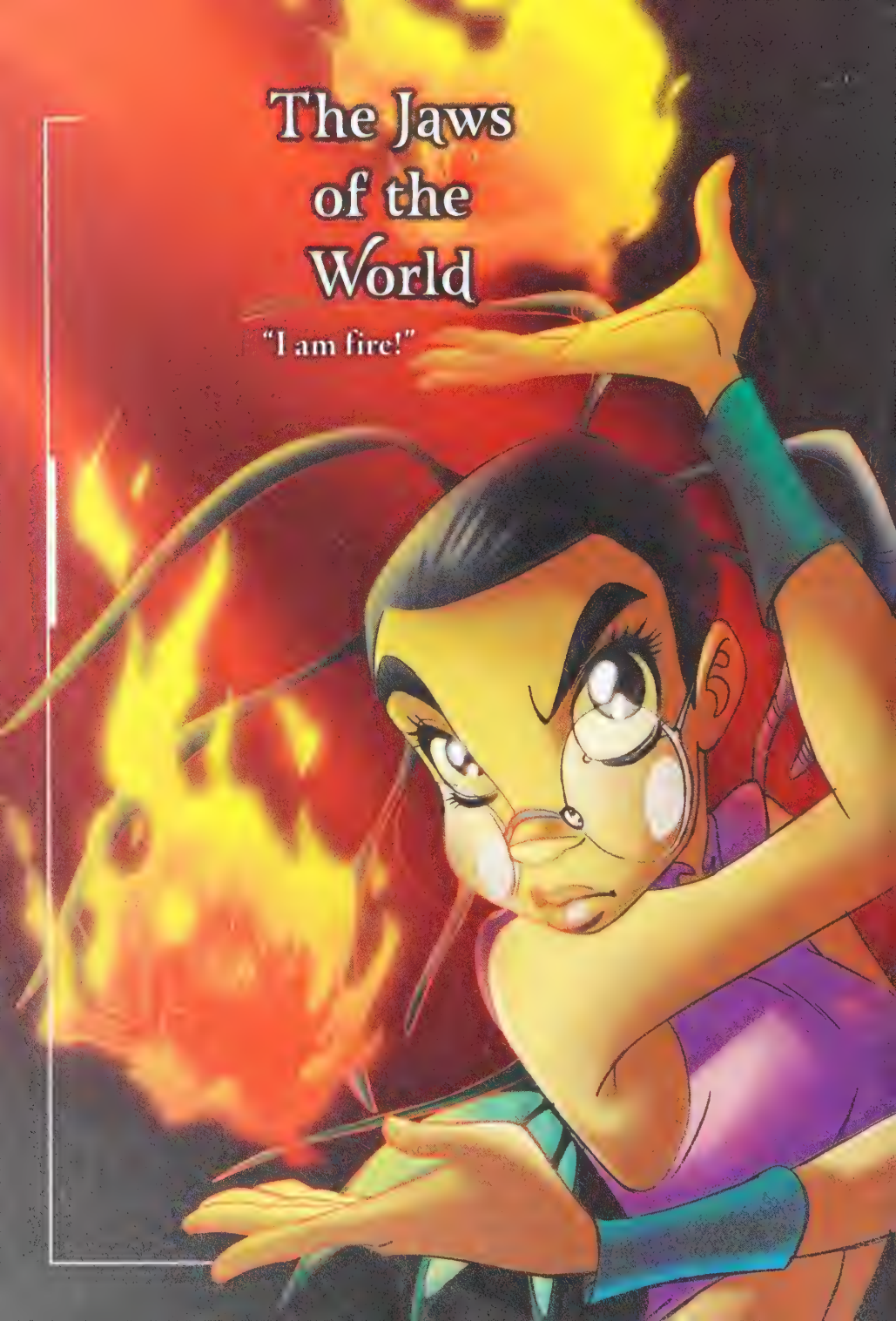
KRAAAM
YOU OKAY?
HUH?
I...YES! I'M FINE. ALL THE DUST IN THE BOOKSHOP IS MAKING MY EYES WATER.

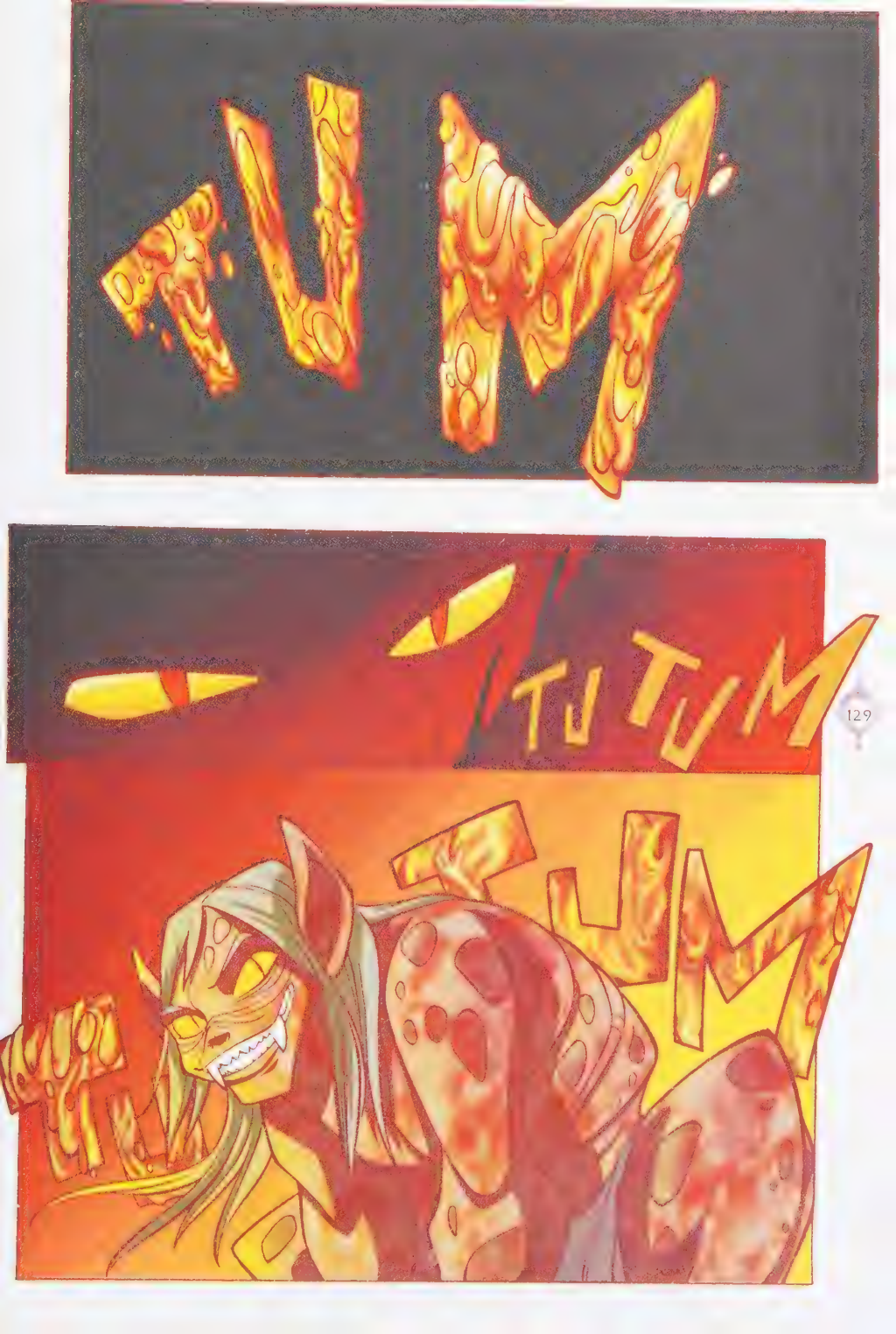
YEAH, RIGHT! HEY, THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH BEING TOUCHED BY WILL AND MATT'S STORY.
I THINK YOU'RE *TOUCHED* IN THE *HEAD*!
UM! GOT IT! I WON'T SAY A WORD, I SWEAR.
I'M GONNA GO WITH THE OTHERS. WHAT ABOUT YOU? NOT GOING HOME?
WHY, DO I HAVE A HOUSE?
ACTUALLY, THAT'S NOT A BAD IDEA. AFTER ALL THIS TIME WATCHING THE MAGICAL BOOK...
...I THINK I DESERVE A SHOWER AND ONE OF THOSE SAPPY MOVIES THAT...
*UM...BETTER TO GO FOR A **RELAXING** ACTION MOVIE!*

CEDRIC, YOU STILL IN THERE? YOU'LL BE GLAD TO HEAR I'M FINALLY LEAVING...
YES, ORUBE, IT'S WHAT YOU THINK. THE BOOK JUST SPOKE AGAIN.
IT CONGRATULATED THE GUARDIANS FOR RECOVERING THE SYMBOL AND GAVE ME A NEW RIDDLE TO SOLVE.
"IT PULSATES IN THE JAWS OF THE WORLD! AND IT WAITS FOR YOU...
"...TO FALL BETWEEN ITS SHARP, FIERY FANGS!"
END OF CHAPTER 58

Witch
Will
Irma
Taranee
Cornelia
Hay Lin

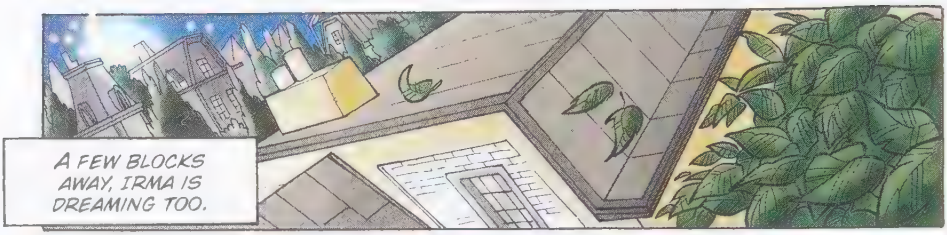
59

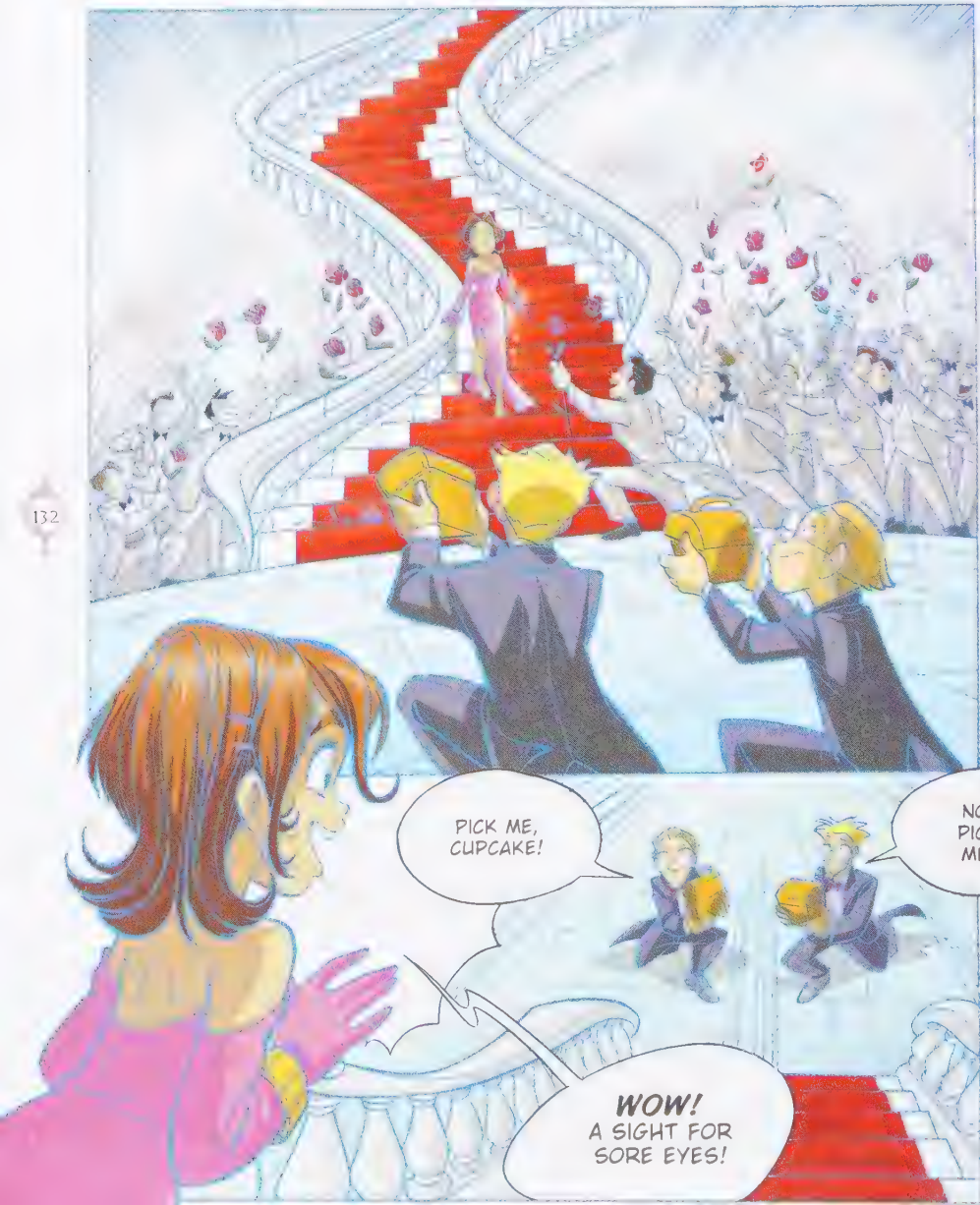

The Jaws of the World
"I am fire!"


TUM
TU TUM
TUM

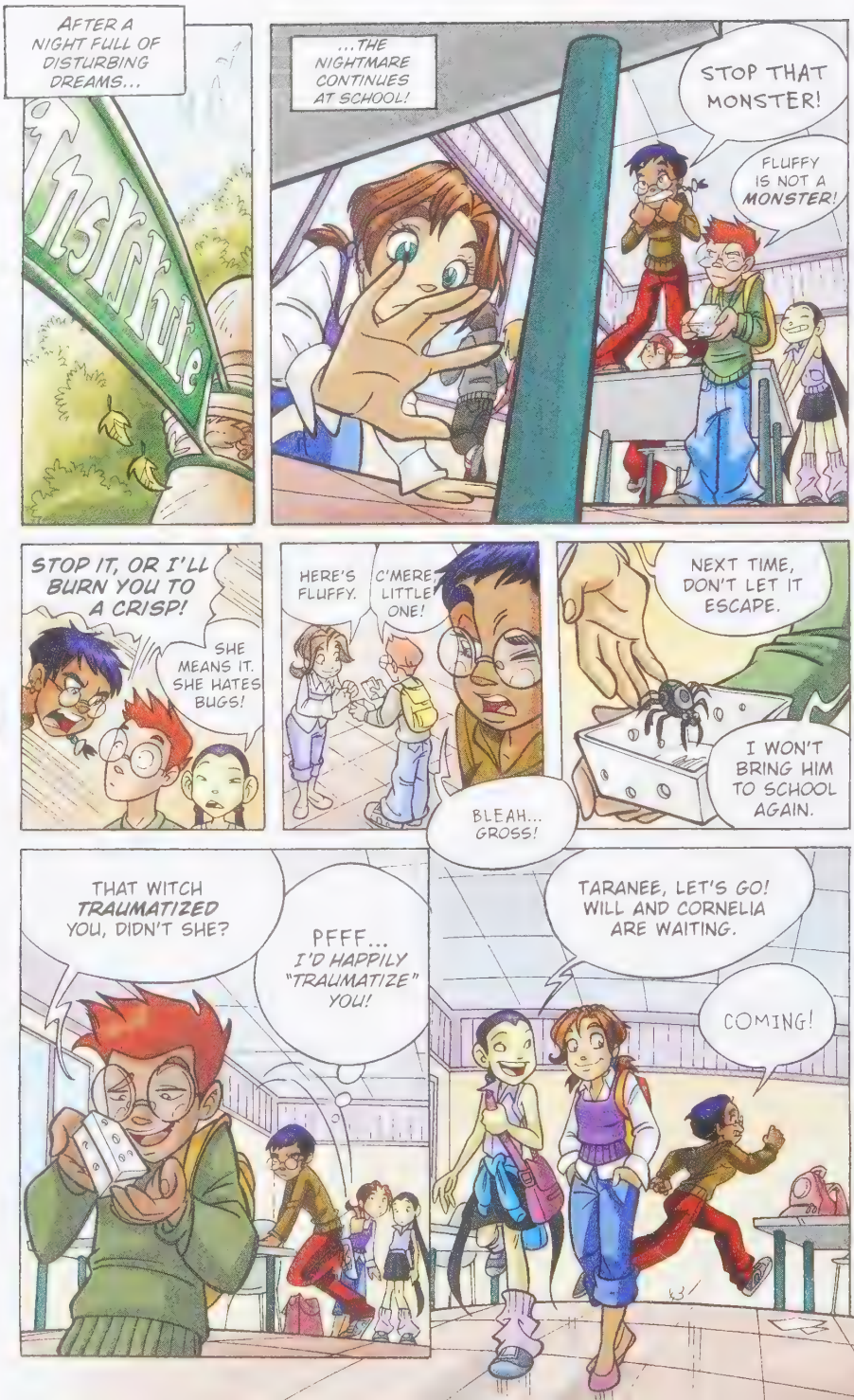
TU-TUM
TU TUM
TUM
TU TUM
TU-TUM

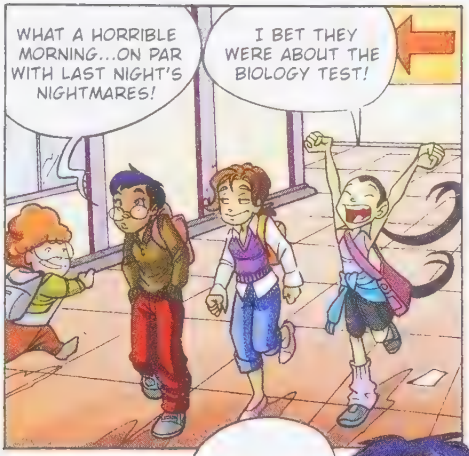
TUM
TU
TUM
TU
TUM
AAAH...
AAAHHH...

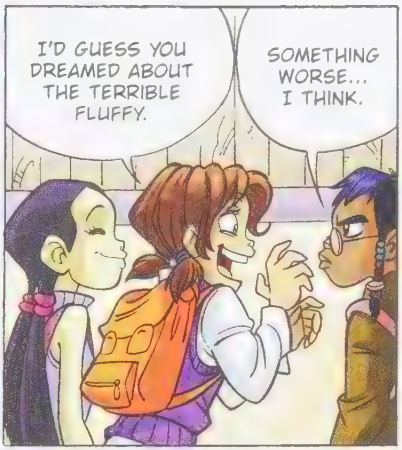

A FEW BLOCKS AWAY, IRMA IS DREAMING TOO.

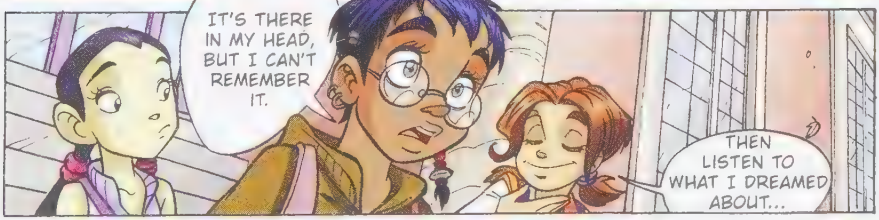

PICK ME, CUPCAKE!
NO, PICK ME!
WOW! A SIGHT FOR SORE EYES!

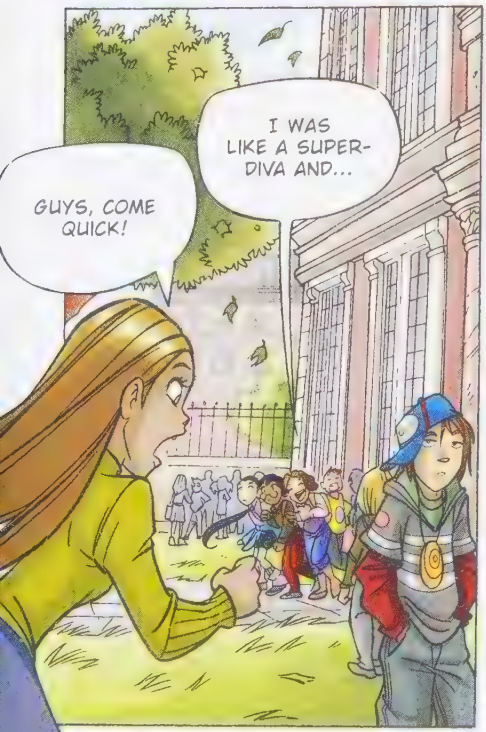
YUM...
-:CHOMP:-
-:MUNCH, MUNCH:-
-:CHOMP:-
BLUB BLUB BLUB
BLUB
WHAT A YUMMY SNACK!
UGH!
I WAS EATEN BY A DONUT???

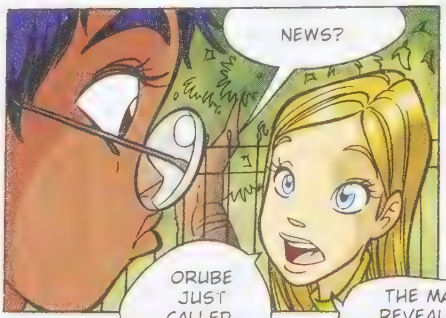

AFTER A NIGHT FULL OF DISTURBING DREAMS...
...THE NIGHTMARE CONTINUES AT SCHOOL!
STOP THAT MONSTER!
FLUFFY IS NOT A MONSTER!
STOP IT, OR I'LL BURN YOU TO A CRISP!
SHE MEANS IT. SHE HATES BUGS!
HERE'S FLUFFY.
C'MERE, LITTLE ONE!
NEXT TIME, DON'T LET IT ESCAPE.
I WON'T BRING HIM TO SCHOOL AGAIN.
BLEAH... GROSS!
THAT WITCH TRAUMATIZED YOU, DIDN'T SHE?
PFFF... I'D HAPPILY "TRAUMATIZE" YOU!
TARANEE, LET'S GO! WILL AND CORNELIA ARE WAITING.
COMING!


WHAT A HORRIBLE MORNING...ON PAR WITH LAST NIGHT'S NIGHTMARES!
I BET THEY WERE ABOUT THE BIOLOGY TEST!

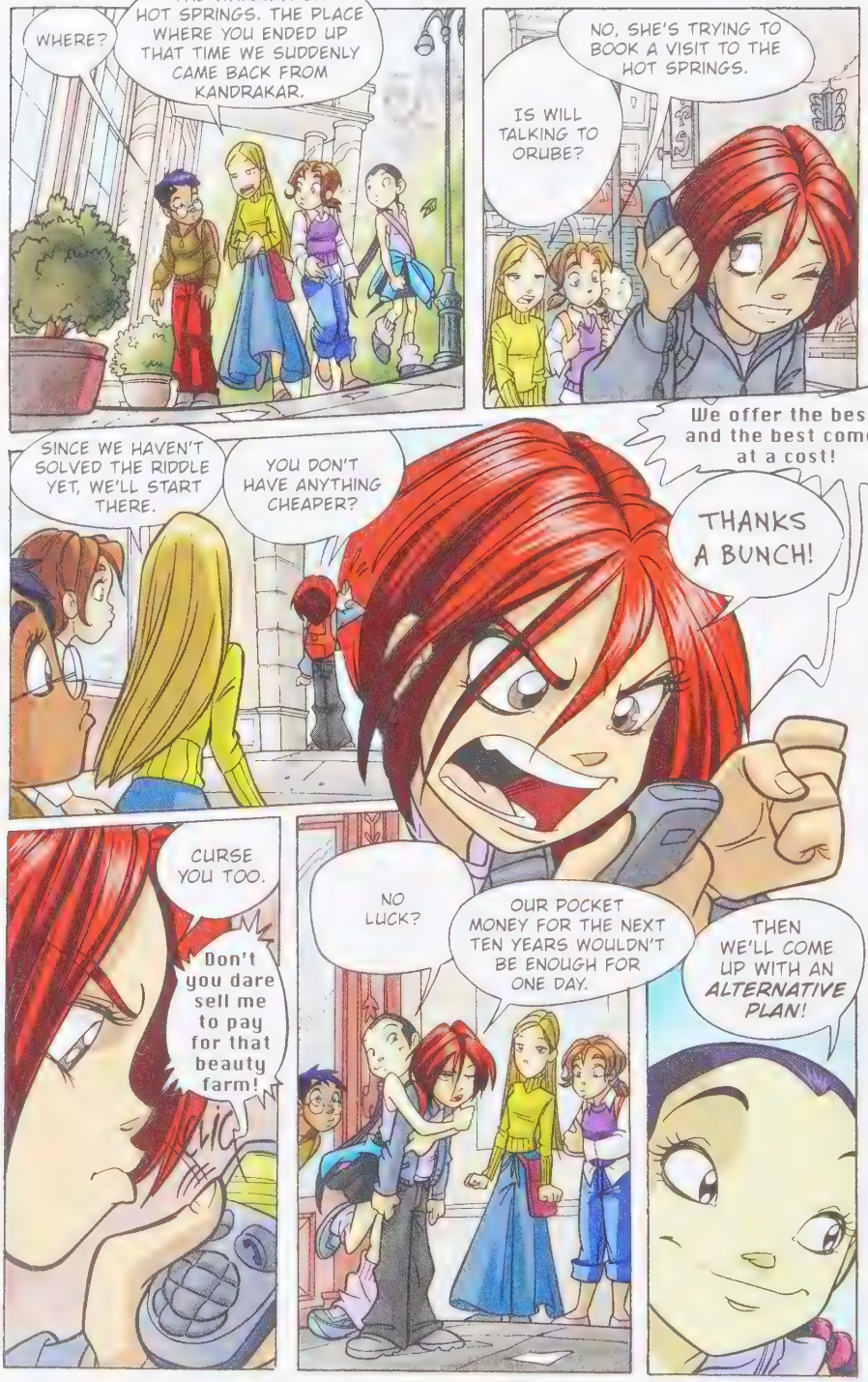

I'D GUESS YOU DREAMED ABOUT THE TERRIBLE FLUFFY.
SOMETHING WORSE... I THINK.


IT'S THERE IN MY HEAD, BUT I CAN'T REMEMBER IT.
THEN LISTEN TO WHAT I DREAMED ABOUT...


I WAS LIKE A SUPER-DIVA AND...
GUYS, COME QUICK!


NEWS?
ORUBE JUST CALLED.

THE MAP REVEALED WHERE TO LOOK FOR THE NEXT STONE.


WHERE?
THE WARMWATER HOT SPRINGS. THE PLACE WHERE YOU ENDED UP THAT TIME WE SUDDENLY CAME BACK FROM KANDRAKAR.
IS WILL TALKING TO ORUBE?
NO, SHE'S TRYING TO BOOK A VISIT TO THE HOT SPRINGS.
SINCE WE HAVEN'T SOLVED THE RIDDLE YET, WE'LL START THERE.
YOU DON'T HAVE ANYTHING CHEAPER?
We offer the best, and the best comes at a cost!
THANKS A BUNCH!
CURSE YOU TOO.
Don't you dare sell me to pay for that beauty farm!
NO LUCK?
OUR POCKET MONEY FOR THE NEXT TEN YEARS WOULDN'T BE ENOUGH FOR ONE DAY.
THEN WE'LL COME UP WITH AN ALTERNATIVE PLAN!

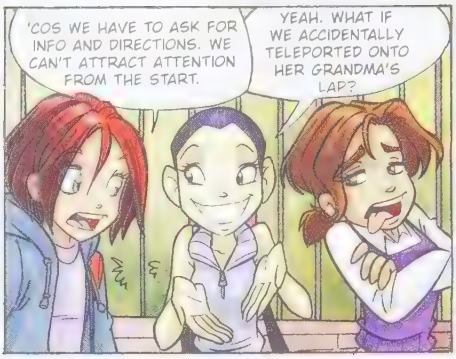
DEAL!
IRMA AND I WILL COME UP WITH A CLEVER PLAN TO GET US INTO THE HOT SPRINGS, AND YOU WRING OUT THE ANSWER TO THAT RIDDLE!
THEN LET'S GO EAT AT THE GOLDEN.
UM... ACTUALLY, I HAVE REHEARSALS.
I CAN'T! GRANDMA'S COMING FOR LUNCH TODAY.
YOU KNOW THEY PICKED ME FOR TONIGHT'S RECITAL. IT'S THE FIRST TIME I'VE BEEN CHOSEN FOR A REAL SHOW, AND...
OKAY, OKAY! I FORGOT.
WELL, EACH OF US SHOULD KEEP TRYING TO FIGURE OUT THAT RIDDLE ON OUR OWN TOO.
LET'S MEET UP TOMORROW MORNING TO BRAINSTORM.
OKAY...
WHY DO I FEEL LIKE A MONSTER?
SAVE YOUR ENERGY FOR THE RIDDLE.

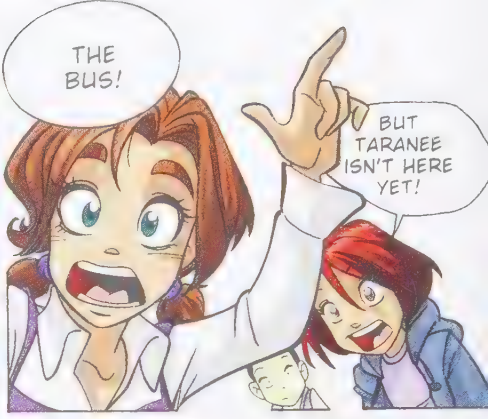
"IT PULSATES IN THE JAWS OF THE WORLD AND WAITS FOR YOU TO FALL BETWEEN ITS SHARP, FIERY FANGS."
WHAT OR WHERE ARE THE JAWS OF THE WORLD? AND WHY THE FIERY FANGS?
JAWS... MOUTH... TEETH... EATING... FOOD... SURVIVAL...
NO, THIS DOESN'T MAKE SENSE. LET'S START OVER. JAWS... MOUTH... OPEN MOUTH... CREVASSE...
THE HALE RESIDENCE.
SORRY I'M LATE...
YOUR MOTHER SHOULD'VE TAUGHT YOU TO BE PUNCTUAL!
IGNORE IT, LIZ. DON'T EVEN LISTEN!

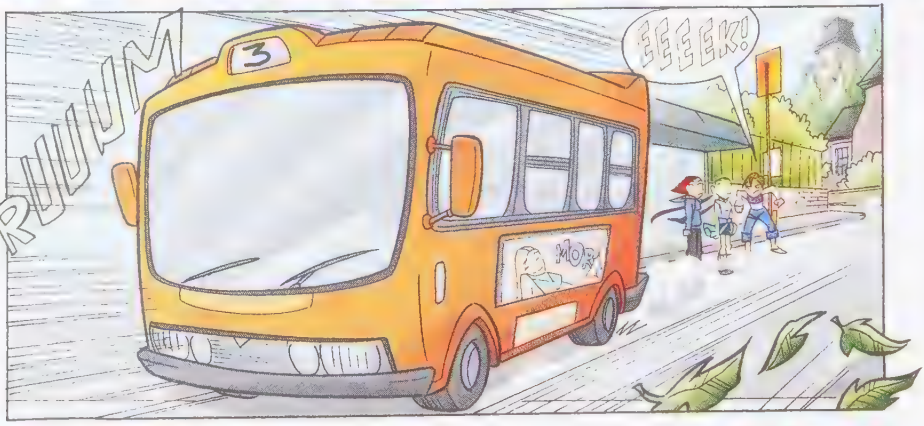
What's this?
A LOVELY present from Grandma!
AT HER AGE, CORNELIA SHOULD KNOW HOW TO BEHAVE PROPERLY!
YUM... I MARRIED THE QUEEN OF LEEK SOUP!
A PERSON'S BEHAVIOR IS THEIR CALLING CARD.
LET'S SEE... WHAT'S THAT RIDDLE AGAIN?
IT PULSATES IN THE JAWS OF THE WORLD...
CORNELIA MUST BEHAVE LIKE A HALE, SINCE SHE'S A HALE!
AND YOU'VE BEEN A DISASTROUS PARENT, ELIZABETH.
YOUR DAUGHTER NEEDS A FIRM HAND!
AND SINCE THERE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE ONE IN THIS FAMILY, I'LL TAKE ON THE BURDEN!

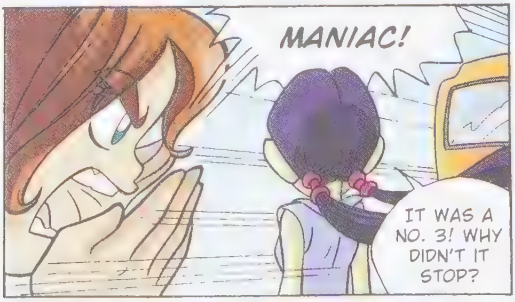
CORNELIA WILL SPEND THE WEEKEND WITH ME.
NO!
I DON'T THINK SHE...
SHE'LL LOVE IT. THE WARM-WATER HOT SPRINGS HAVE A VERY SELECT CLIENTELE.
WARMWATER? YES! THANKS, GRANDMA!
CORNELIA WANTS TO SPEND TIME WITH MY MOTHER? WHAT'S GOING ON?
GRANNY, I'M THRILLED! I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO GO THERE.
SEE, ELIZABETH? CORNELIA IS A TRUE HALE!
YEAH! AND SHE'S FULL OF SURPRISES.
AND I'M SURE SHE'S UP TO SOMETHING!
UM...CAN MY FRIENDS COME TOO?
THERE WE GO.
ONLY IF YOU ASSURE ME THEY'RE WORTHY OF SUCH AN EXCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT.
SUPER-MEGA WORTHY!

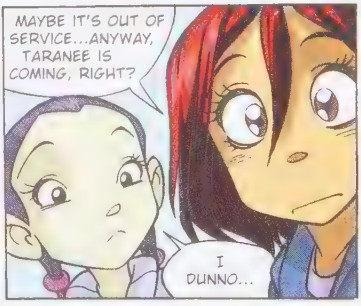
I'LL TELL THEM RIGHT NOW!
WAIT A MOMENT!
YEEES?
A LADY DOESN'T SAY "SUPER-MEGA"!
OH... OF COURSE, GRANDMA. SORRY!
YOU SHOULD CONFIRM WITH CORNELIA'S FRIENDS' MOTHERS.
BRILLIANT IDEA! I HADN'T THOUGHT ABOUT THAT.
WILL...READY FOR THE BIG NEWS?
ADMIT IT. CORNELIA'S A GENIUS!
IF SHE WAS, SHE'D HAVE TOLD US TO TELEPORT. WHY CAN'T WE ANYWAY?
HOW COME SHE'S GONNA TRAVEL ALL COMFY IN A CAR AND WE GOTTA TAKE THE BUS?

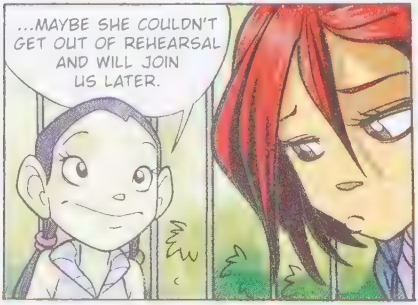

'COS WE HAVE TO ASK FOR INFO AND DIRECTIONS. WE CAN'T ATTRACT ATTENTION FROM THE START.
YEAH. WHAT IF WE ACCIDENTALLY TELEPORTED ONTO HER GRANDMA'S LAP?

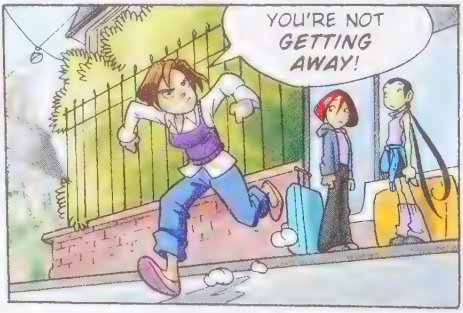

THE BUS!
BUT TARANEE ISN'T HERE YET!

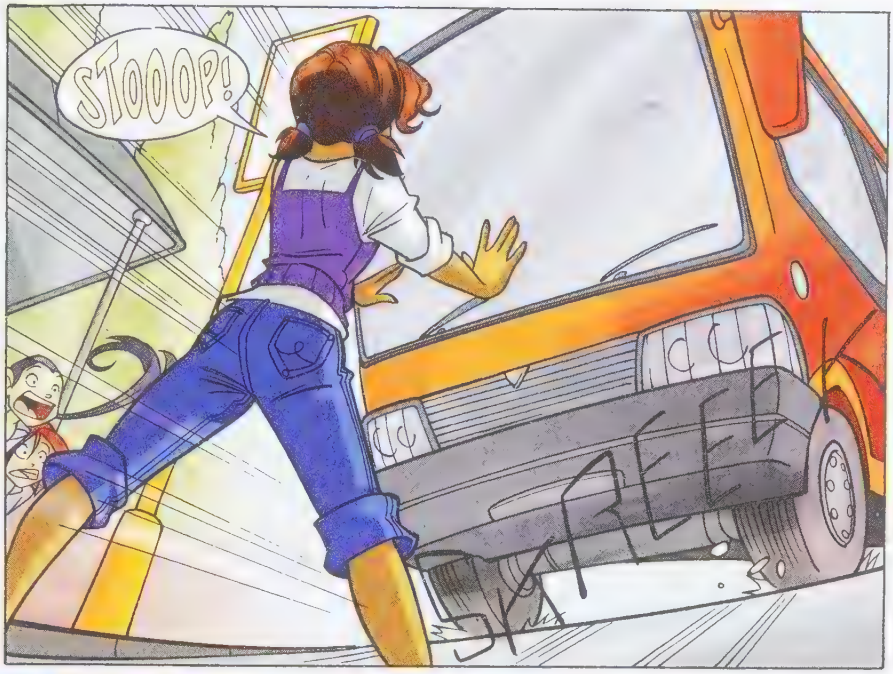

TRUUUM
3
EEEEK!
MOM


MANIAC!
IT WAS A NO. 3! WHY DIDN'T IT STOP?

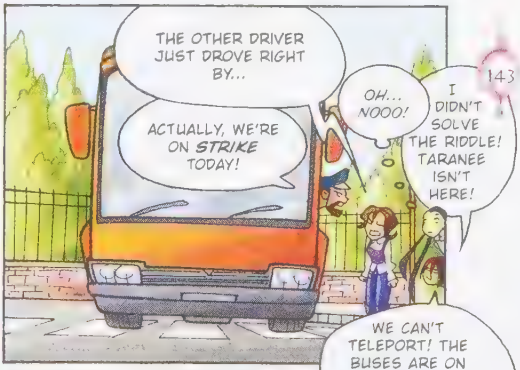

MAYBE IT'S OUT OF SERVICE...ANYWAY, TARANEE IS COMING, RIGHT?
I DUNNO...


...MAYBE SHE COULDN'T GET OUT OF REHEARSAL AND WILL JOIN US LATER.


YOU'RE NOT GETTING AWAY!


STOOOP!

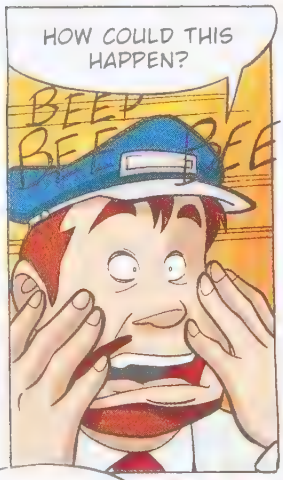
WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?
WE GOTTA GO TO WARMWATER! YOU'RE DRIVING THE NO. 3 BUS...SO LET US ON!

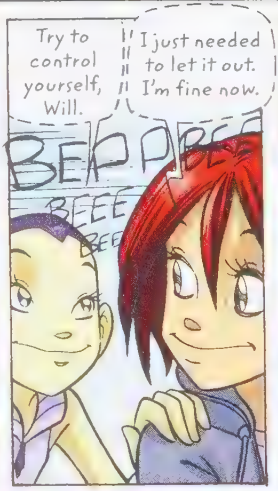

THE OTHER DRIVER JUST DROVE RIGHT BY...
ACTUALLY, WE'RE ON STRIKE TODAY!
OH... NOOO!
I DIDN'T SOLVE THE RIDDLE! TARANEE ISN'T HERE!
WE CAN'T TELEPORT! THE BUSES ARE ON STRIKE! MATT'S A PRISONER, AND I...

...I'M ABOUT TO EXPLODE!

BOOM
BOOM

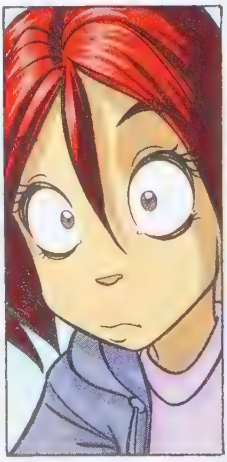
MY TIRES! ALL FOUR OF 'EM JUST EXPLODED!
OOPS...

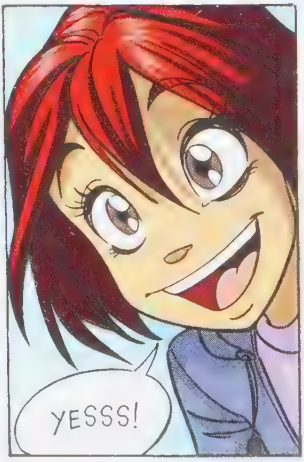

HOW COULD THIS HAPPEN?

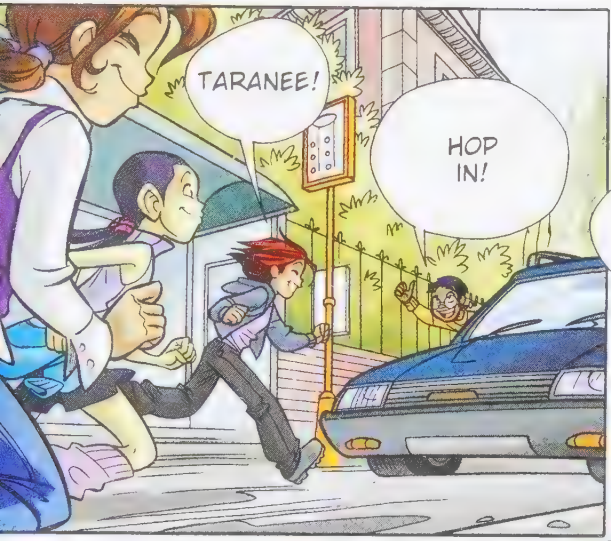

Try to control yourself, Will.
I just needed to let it out. I'm fine now.

BEEP BEEP BEEP
I'M SUPER-CALM AND READY TO COME UP WITH AN ALTERNATIVE PLAN...

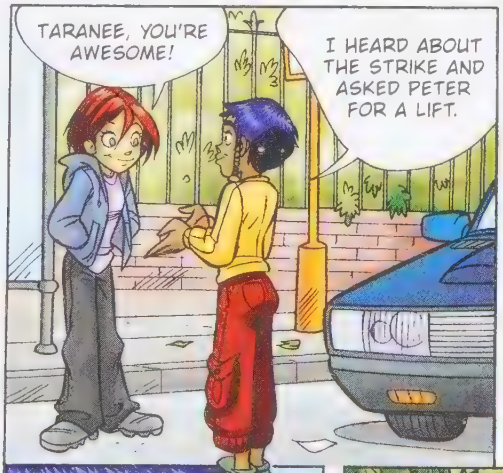
WHATCHA HONKIN' AT?

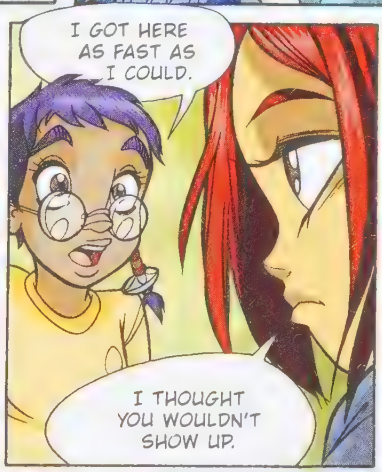


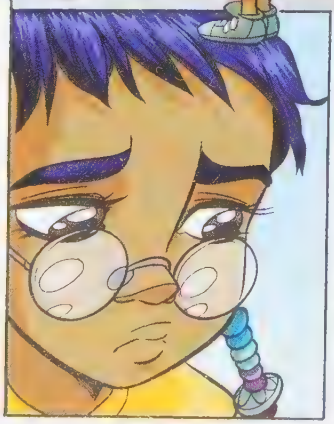

YESSS!


TARANEE!
HOP IN!

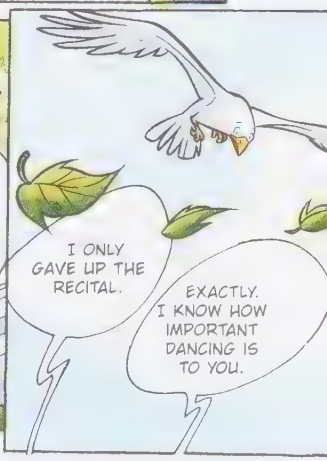
YOU SURE THIS THING WILL MAKE IT ALL THE WAY THERE?
I HEARD THAT!


TARANEE, YOU'RE AWESOME!
I HEARD ABOUT THE STRIKE AND ASKED PETER FOR A LIFT.


I GOT HERE AS FAST AS I COULD.
I THOUGHT YOU WOULDN'T SHOW UP.



THAT'S WHY I WANNA APOLOGIZE AND THANK YOU FOR BEING HERE.


I ONLY GAVE UP THE RECITAL.
EXACTLY. I KNOW HOW IMPORTANT DANCING IS TO YOU.

AND I KNOW HOW IMPORTANT MATT IS TO YOU AND HOW YOU'VE BEEN SUFFERING, EVEN IF YOU HIDE IT.
BUT MOST IMPORTANTLY, I KNOW WHERE MY PLACE IS.
AND IT'S HERE. WITH YOU.
DESTINATION: WARMWATER.
GUYS, LET'S NOT BRING UP MATT.
BY THE WAY, WILL, I'VE BEEN MEANING TO ASK...
IF YOU'RE DONE BEING SAPPY, WE'RE READY TO GO!
...HAVE YOU HEARD FROM MATT LATELY?
UNGH...
PETER, WATCH OUT FOR THAT DOG!
WHERE? WHERE?

WHOOPS. MAYBE MY GLASSES ARE DIRTY.
WHY'D I EVEN BOTHER?
ANYWAY, WILL, I WAS SAYING...
URGH! WHATCHA DOING?
YOUR DREADS LOOK GREAT TODAY!
LOOK! I FOUND A STEREO. YOU DON'T MIND, RIGHT, PETER?
KEEP IT UP! DON'T GIVE HIM A BREAK.
♫ I SING A SONG FOR YOOOuuu... ♪
IT'S GONNA BE A LONG TRIP!

WARMWATER HOT SPRINGS
BATHS of WARM WATER
THERE THEY ARE! FINALLY!
I WAS HOPING YOUR FRIENDS WOULD COME IN A MORE APPROPRIATE VEHICLE!
ONE LAST EFFORT, PETER. YOU CAN DO IT!
WHAT'S THAT HIPPIE DOING HERE?
HI, PETER! ARE YOU STAYING TOO?
MAYBE SOME OTHER TIME. YOUR FRIENDS HAVE WORN ME OUT!
SEE YA!
WHAT DID YOU DO TO HIM?
A few DIVERSIONARY TACTICS so he wouldn't ask about Matt!
HEE-HEE-HEE! POOR PETER!
GOOD MORNING.
AREN'T YOU GOING TO INTRODUCE ME TO YOUR FRIENDS, CORNELIA?
OF COURSE, GRANDMA!

THIS IS TARANEE COOK.
JUDGE COOK'S DAUGHTER?
YES, MA'AM!
THIS IS IRMA LAIR.
HMM... I DON'T KNOW ANY LAIRS. WHAT CIRCLES DOES YOUR FATHER MOVE IN?
MOSTLY CRIMINAL ONES!
OH!
IRMA MEANS HER DAD'S A POLICEMAN!
LET'S MOVE ON...
WHAT DID I SAY?

GO FRESHEN UP. AND MIND YOU BEHAVE IN A MANNER BEFITTING...
"...SUCH AN EXCLUSIVE PLACE!"
IT'S HEAVEN!
JUST FOUR BEDS?
I GOTTA ROOM WITH GRANDMA...TO LEARN PROPER MANNERS!
THERE'S AN OPEN-AIR THERMAL BATH!
WE CAN USE IT IF WE WANT.
WE'RE NOT HERE TO HAVE FUN.
I KNOW, SO I CAME UP WITH A KIND OF PLAN.
SINCE WE DON'T KNOW WHERE THE STONE IS EXACTLY, WE'LL EXPLORE THE HOT SPRINGS TONIGHT.
GRANDMA GOES TO BED AT 9:00.
AT 9:01, WE'LL START INVESTI-GATING.
AND IN THE MEANTIME?

"LET'S DIVE IN!"
CANNON-BALL!
STAY CLOSE TO ME ONCE I'M IN!
YOU MIGHT WANNA MOVE!
SPLASH!
WE'VE GOT IMPROVE OUR REFLEXES.
HA-HA-HA! IF YOU COULD SEE YOURSELF...
COME JOIN US!
NOPE! THIS JACUZZI IS THE BEST THING IN THE WORLD.
THE WATER IS SO WARM AND RELAXING!
TUM

TU
TUM
THAT NOISE AGAIN!
TUTUM
WILL! HELP!
WILL!
TU TUM
TUTUM TUTUM

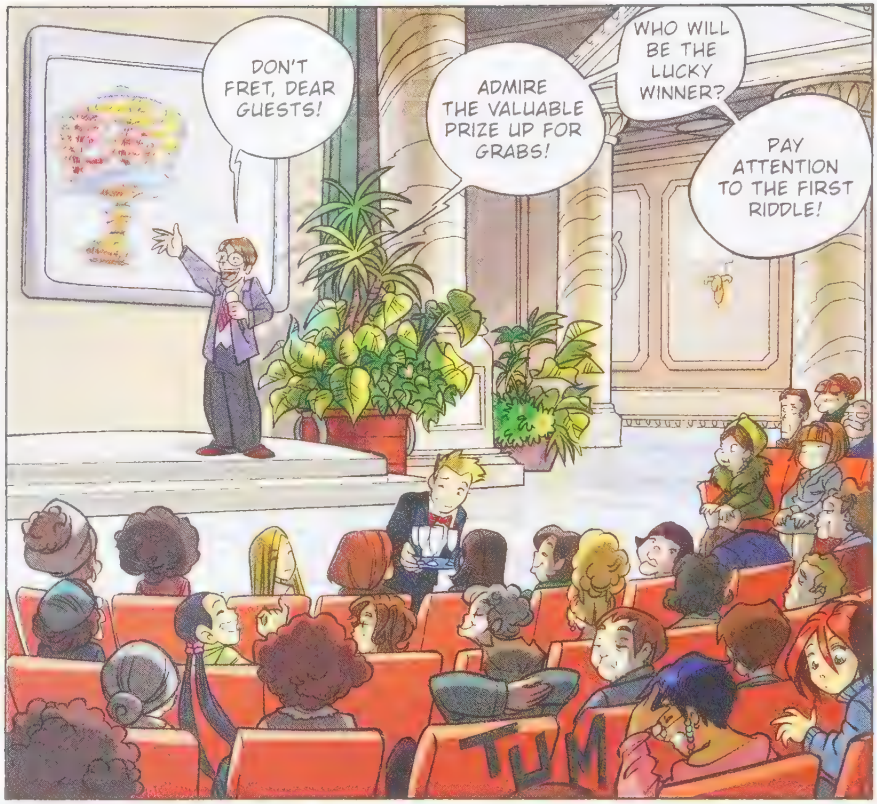
TU TUM
IT'S OKAY... YOU'RE PART OF ME.
RETURN TO YOUR ELEMENT.
TU TUM
BECOME FIRE!
TU TUM
NOOO!
TARANEE, WAKE UP!
TU TUM
WE HAVE TO TALK IN PRIVATE— RIGHT NOW!

WOULD YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS LIKE A DRINK?
ER... NO THANKS!
I had the same dream last night, and I remember it all now. I know WHAT'S going to attack us.
GO! I'LL GET RID OF HIM AND JOIN YOU.
HOW LONG ARE YOU HERE FOR?
SORRY, BUT...
DID YOU ALREADY VISIT THE WHOLE SPA? I CAN GIVE YOU A TOUR IF YOU'D LIKE!
ROOM 112
I DON'T THINK YOUR DREAM WAS A PREMON-ITION.
I'M TELLING YOU IT WAS MORE THAN JUST A DREAM— BOTH LAST NIGHT AND JUST NOW.
AND DON'T FORGET MY DREAM.
I DOUBT WE'RE GOING TO GET EATEN BY A GIANT DONUT!
WE CAN ONLY KEEP OUR EYES OPEN. EVEN IF IT MEANT SOMETHING, YOUR NIGHTMARE DIDN'T TELL YOU ANYTHING USEFUL.
YOU AGREE WITH CORNELIA?

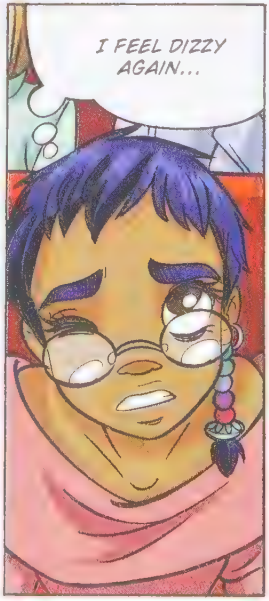
I DUNNO, BUT STRESS CAN PLAY TRICKS ON YOU. ONCE, BEFORE A MATH TEST, I DREAMED OF MR. HORSEBERG!
AS SILLY AS IT WAS, THAT NIGHTMARE SEEMED SO REAL.
BUT IN THE END, IT MEANT NOTHING. I EVEN GOT A GOOD GRADE.
TOC TOC
WHEN THAT CREATURE TALKED TO ME, IT WAS AS IF IT WAS IN MY HEAD.
HURRY, GIRLS! I JUST SIGNED YOU UP FOR A TREASURE HUNT. YOU'LL HAVE A SNACK, THEN THE HUNT, THE PRIZE CEREMONY, AND DINNER AT MIDNIGHT!
WHAT?
YOU'RE LUCKY... WE USUALLY GO TO BED EARLY!
We can't waste all that time.

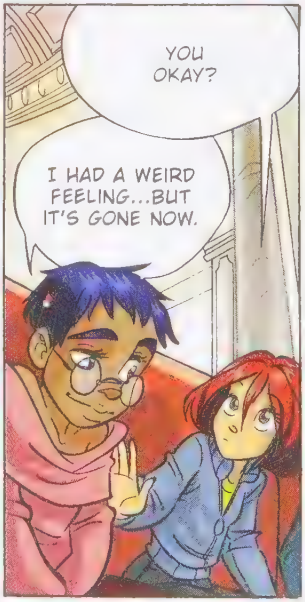
I'D RATHER SKIP THE TREASURE HUNT...
MAY I REMIND YOU YOU'RE MY GUEST!
WE LOVE SOLVING RIDDLES AND LOOKING FOR STUFF.
WILL WAS KIDDING. A TREASURE HUNT IS A FANTASTIC IDEA!
YOU THINK?
OF COURSE, MA'AM. WE'LL BE HAPPY TO JOIN.
GOOD!
I'LL BE IN THE MAIN HALL IN TEN MINUTES.
SEE YOU SOON, MA'AM!
!?
AND MAKE YOURSELF PRESENTABLE!
WHAT DID I DO? WHY'S SHE MAD AT ME?

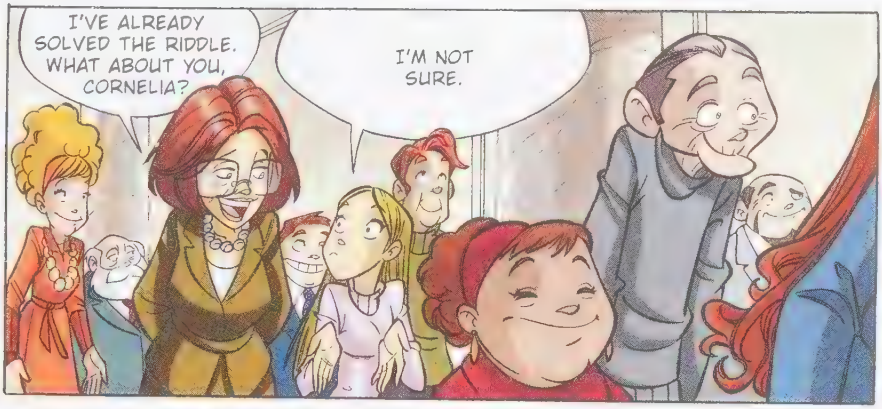
IT'S THE PERFECT EXCUSE TO NOSE AROUND.
BZZZZ
I DIDN'T THINK ABOUT THAT...
...AND I THINK I TICKED OFF YOUR GRANDMA!
DON'T MIND HER. SHE GETS ANNOYED ABOUT EVERY-THING.
WHAT HELD YOU UP SO LONG? WAS IT THAT GUY?
YOU BET. TUDOR TOLD ME A LOAD OF INTERESTING STUFF.
BZZZZ
"ONE OF THE HOT SPRINGS LEADS TO A NETWORK OF TUNNELS THAT GO DEEP INTO THE EARTH. THAT'S WHERE THE HOT WATER AND THERMAL MUD COME FROM."
THE FOUNDER OF THE BEAUTY FARM CALLS THAT PLACE...THE JAWS OF THE WORLD!
YOU KNOW HOW TO GET THERE?
TUDOR WILL TAKE US!


DON'T FRET, DEAR GUESTS!
ADMIRE THE VALUABLE PRIZE UP FOR GRABS!
WHO WILL BE THE LUCKY WINNER?
PAY ATTENTION TO THE FIRST RIDDLE!

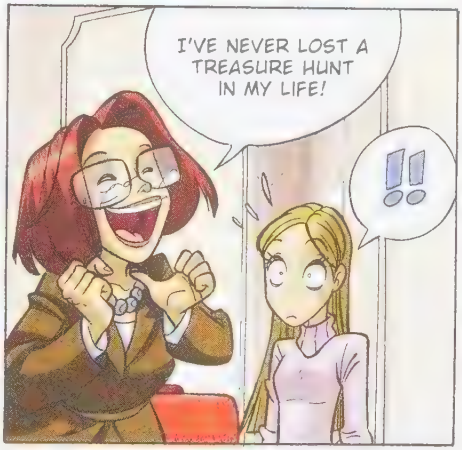
WHAT HAS HANDS BUT CANNOT CLAP? GOT IT?

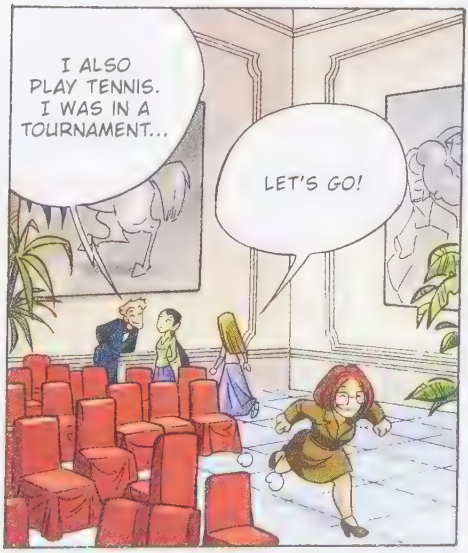

I FEEL DIZZY AGAIN...

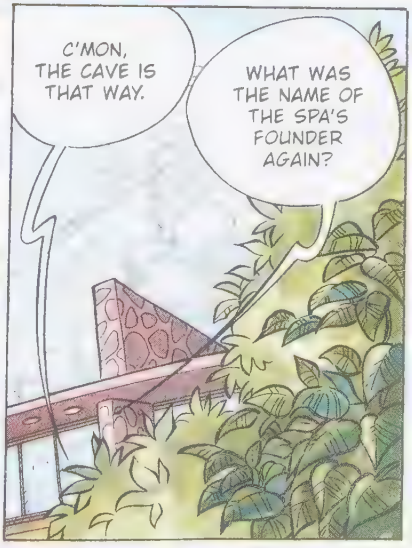

YOU OKAY?
I HAD A WEIRD FEELING...BUT IT'S GONE NOW.


I'VE ALREADY SOLVED THE RIDDLE. WHAT ABOUT YOU, CORNELIA?
I'M NOT SURE.

HA! SHE DOESN'T KNOW IT'S THE CLOCK!
I'M GOING TO ASK MY FRIENDS FOR HELP...
GO AHEAD, BUT DON'T GO THINKING YOU'LL WIN!

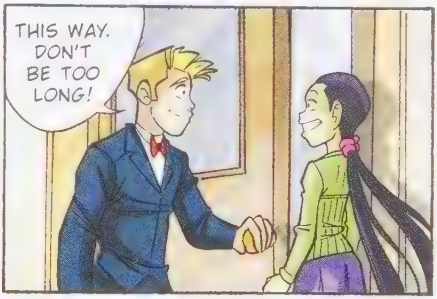

I'VE NEVER LOST A TREASURE HUNT IN MY LIFE!
!!

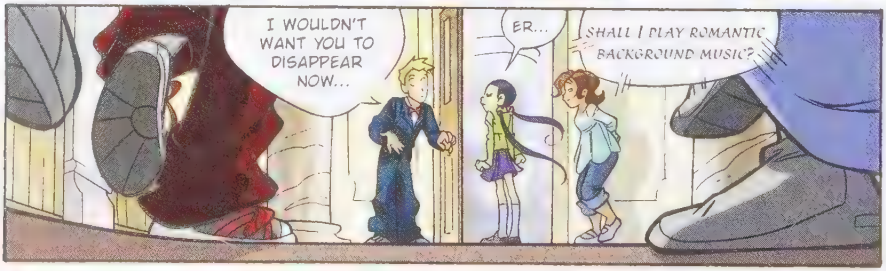

I ALSO PLAY TENNIS. I WAS IN A TOURNAMENT...
LET'S GO!

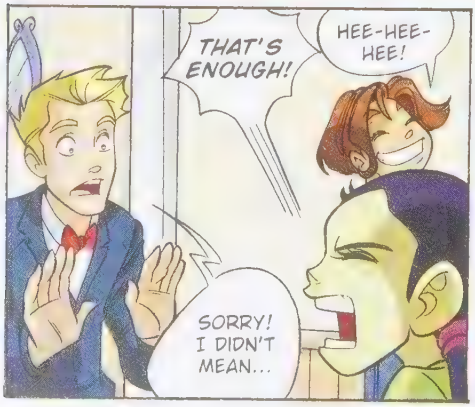

C'MON, THE CAVE IS THAT WAY.
WHAT WAS THE NAME OF THE SPA'S FOUNDER AGAIN?

I DON'T REMEMBER, BUT IF YOU GIVE ME YOUR NUMBER, I'LL LET YOU KNOW!
GREAT!
Aren't you forgetting about Eric?

I HEARD THAT! AND WE'RE JUST TALKING!
THE TRUTH HURTS, HUH?


THIS WAY. DON'T BE TOO LONG!


I WOULDN'T WANT YOU TO DISAPPEAR NOW...
ER...
SHALL I PLAY ROMANTIC BACKGROUND MUSIC?


THAT'S ENOUGH!
HEE-HEE-HEE!
SORRY! I DIDN'T MEAN...

I WASN'T TALKING TO YOU.
TO WHOM, THEN?

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. SEE YA LATER!
IT'S SO HOT! I DUNNO WHY PEOPLE LIKE THIS KIND OF PLACE.
YOU GUYS OKAY?
GEEEEK
I WOULD BE IF I HAD WINDSHIELD WIPERS FOR MY GLASSES!
I CAN'T SEE A THING...
IT'S NOT VERY INVITING...
WHO GOES FIRST?
TUM
TU
TUM
I WILL.

CAN YOU KEEP GOING?
TU-TUM
YES.
IF THERE ARE MICE, I'M GOING BACK TO JOIN GRANDMA.
I'M COMING WITH YOU!
I'LL STAY TO COMFORT THE MICE TRAUMATIZED BY YOUR SCREAMS!
WHICH WAY?
THERE'S MORE LIGHT ON THE LEFT.
TUM
LET'S GO RIGHT. TRUST ME.

IT PULSATES IN THE JAWS OF THE WORLD AND WAITS FOR YOU TO FALL BETWEEN ITS SHARP, FIERY FANGS!
GOOD CHOICE, TARA. YOU'RE LEADING US TOWARD A BRIGHT FUTURE!
I DON'T SEE WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT...
FIRE!
WAAAAH!
LOOK OUT!
HELP...

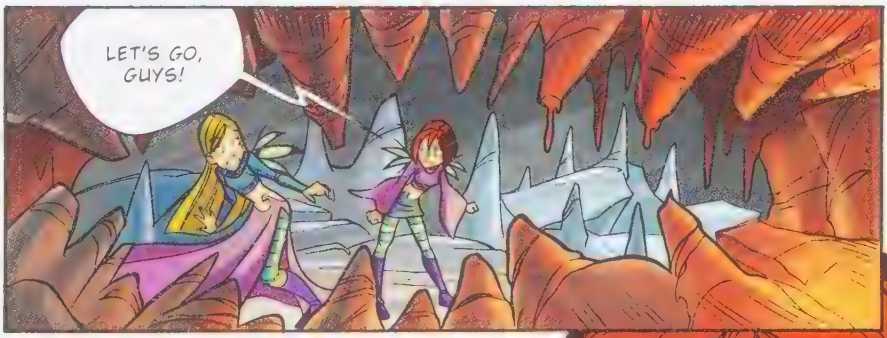
QUICK, TRANSFORM!
NOOO!
HEART OF KANDRAKAR!
EARTH!
WATER!
FIRE!
AIR!
SAFE!

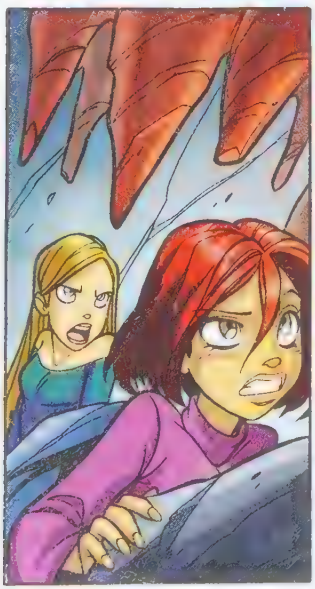
THAT WAS CLOSE, HUH?
TU TUM
NOTHING COMPARED TO THE MATH TEACHER WHEN SHE'S ANGRY!
WHAT'S UP, TARANEE?
THE ELEMENTAL CUSTODIAN IS PURE FIRE. WE'LL FIND IT OVER THERE.
I SENSE ITS PRESENCE, LIKE I CAN SENSE OTHER PEOPLE'S THOUGHTS.
WE'RE RIGHT BEHIND YOU!
TU-TUM
TU-TU

THE LAST TUNNEL
I HOPE WE CAME THE RIGHT WAY. ALL THIS WALKING IS MAKING MY FEET HURT.
TU-TUM
TU-TUM
TARANEE...
COME.
TUTUM
WE ARE FIRE...
TU-TUM
STRAIGHT AHEAD, I GUESS?
SHE CAN'T SEE OR HEAR ME. ONLY YOU CAN.
NO PROBLEM. LET'S GO.
SORRY, I WAS SPACING OUT.

IT LOOKS LIKE A MOUTH READY TO SWALLOW US!
THE JAWS OF THE WORLD!
DON'T TELL ME WE GOTTA GO IN THERE.
MAKE THEM CONTINUE...

EXACTLY. THE CUSTODIAN WILL BE ON THE OTHER SIDE.
BUT OF COURSE!


LET'S GO, GUYS!



THAT'S IMPRESSIVE!

UM, TARANEE... I DON'T SEE ANYONE HERE.
I HATE TO AGREE WITH IRMA, BUT...
THE CUSTODIAN IS HERE.
NOW SPLIT UP.
CORNELIA, IRMA! YOU EXPLORE THE TUNNEL ON THE LEFT. WILL AND HAY LIN, THE ONE ON THE RIGHT.
I'LL HAVE A LOOK AROUND HERE.
OKAY. BUT LET'S KEEP IN TELEPATHIC CONTACT.

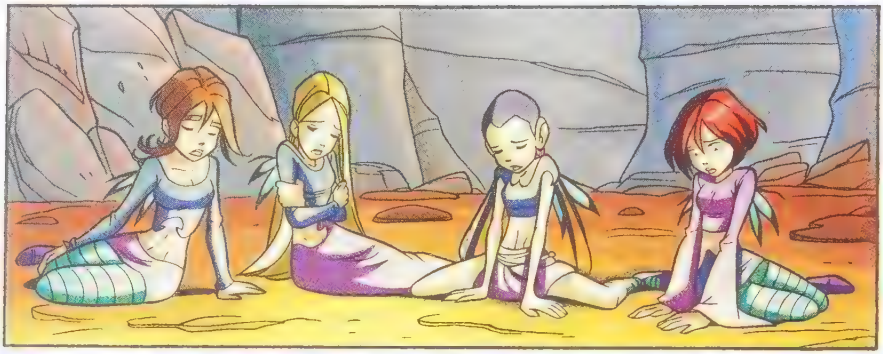
I'M NOT KEEN ON SPLITTING UP. SOMETHING WEIRD'S DOWN HERE.
SOMETHING EVIL. I SENSE IT TOO.
LATER, IN THE LEFT TUNNEL.
END OF THE ROAD. LET'S GO BACK.
NO FAIR! I WANTED TO FIND THE CUSTODIAN.
BLOB
BLOB
I'D HAVE CALLED THE OTHERS SAYING SOMETHING EPIC LIKE RED ALERT!
GUYS, THERE'S NOTHING HERE. WE'RE COMING BACK.
SHOULDN'T WE SEND A TELEPATHIC MESSAGE TO THE OTHERS?
THAT'S WHAT I JUST TRIED TO DO.
IF THAT'S A JOKE, IT'S NOT FUNNY.
TARANEE'S THE ONE WE GO THROUGH FOR OUR TELEPATHY TO WORK. IF SHE DIDN'T HEAR ME, THAT MEANS...
RUN!
TARANEE!

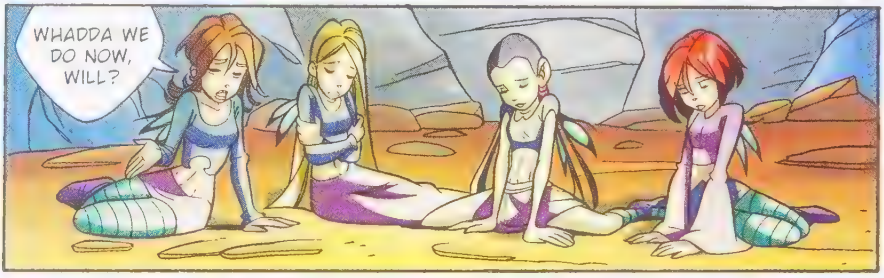
"TARANEE!"
NOW YOU'RE READY.
RETURN TO YOUR ELEMENT!
YOU'LL BE PART OF US.
WE ARE FIRE!
COME!

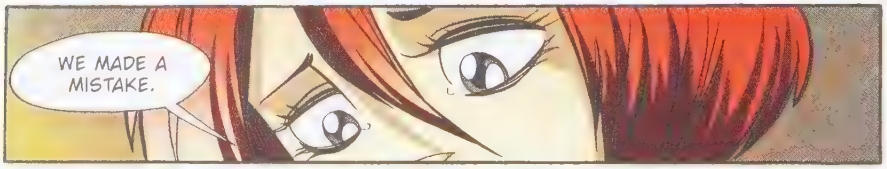
TARANEE! RUN!
WHAT'S SHE DOING? WHY'S SHE SMILING?
WAAAMP
AHHH!
WAAAMKSSS
WATER!
I CAN'T PUT OUT THE FIRE!

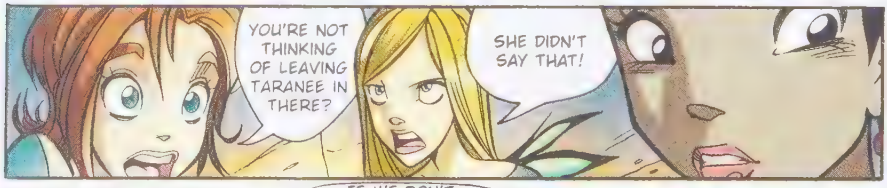
WE ARE FIRE!
WHAT'S GOING—?
LET HER GO!
TARANEE, GIMME YOUR HAND!
NO! GO AWAY!
OUCH!
TUNC
LEAVE ME ALONE!

WHAT JUST HAPPENED?
I DUNNO! WE CAME BACK 'COS SHE WASN'T RESPONDING TO OUR TELEPATHIC MESSAGES.
WHEN WE GOT HERE SHE'D ALREADY BEEN GRABBED.
SHE WAS SINGING IT WAS WEIRD AS IF SHE WAS HAPPY ABOUT IT.
THEN THAT THING STARTED SPITTING FLAMES! IT HAPPENED SO FAST!
IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT, IRMA.
JUST LIKE IT'S NOT MINE OR CORNELIA'S
BUT HOW COULD WE HAVE IMAGINED...?
WHILE YOU WERE WITH TUDOR TARANEE MENTIONED A STRANGE CREATURE FROM HER DREAMS.
THAT TALKED TO HER AS IF IT WAS IN HER HEAD
I TOLD HER ABOUT SOME STUPID NIGHTMARE I HAD BEFORE A TEST. BUT THE RIDDLE TOLD US EVERYTHING!
THE JAWS OF THE WORLD ARE A MONSTER WAITING FOR US!
HOW COULD I NOT GET IT?




WHADDA WE DO NOW, WILL?


WE MADE A MISTAKE.


YOU'RE NOT THINKING OF LEAVING TARANEE IN THERE?
SHE DIDN'T SAY THAT!

WHATEVER WE DECIDE TO DO WILL BE WRONG.
IF WE ATTACK THE MONSTER, WE'LL HIT TARANEE TOO!

IF WE DON'T ATTACK, WE CAN SAY GOOD-BYE TO TARANEE, THE STONE...

...AND MATT.

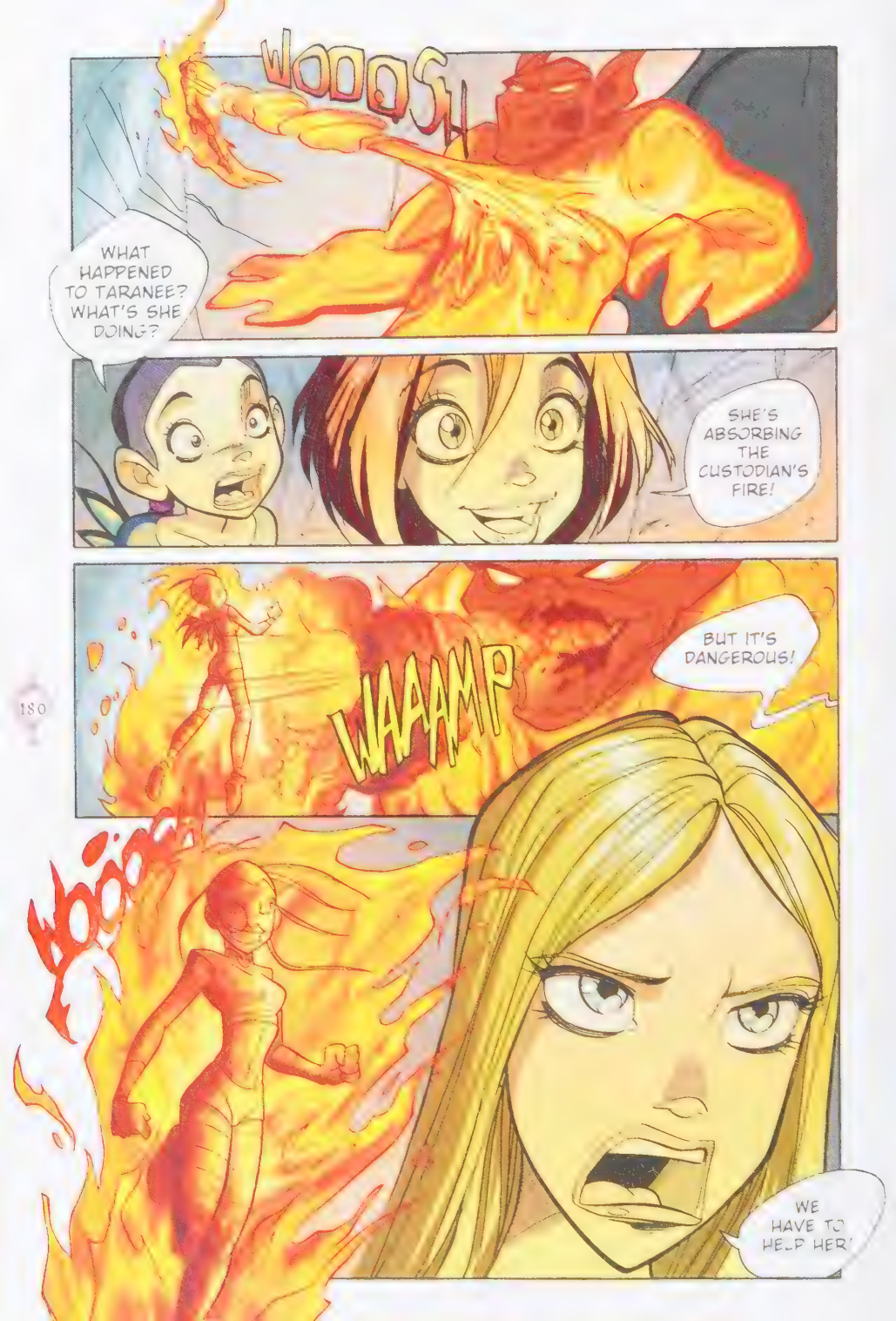
"HOW CAN I CHOOSE?"
WILL... WANT MY ADVICE?
ONLY IF IT'S BRILLIANT.
IF WE DO NOTHING, TARANEE'S TOAST. BUT IF WE ATTACK, MAYBE WE CAN SAVE HER.
WE HAVE TO TRY.
TARANEE'S LIFE COULD HANG ON A "MAYBE."
IS THAT ENOUGH FOR YOU?
WE HAVE NO CHOICE.

"LET'S ATTACK!"
NOTHING'S HAPPENING!
WHAAAM
KEEP GOING!
WE'LL BREAK YOU, YOU STUPID ROCK!
WAAAMP

PURE FIRE LIVES IN BLACK DEPTHS.
TOUCH THE STONE, AND YOU'LL BE PART OF US FOREVER. WE ARE FIRE.
WE ARE FIRE!
WE'LL BE JUST FLAMES.
JUST FLAMES!
"YOUR PLACE IS WITH US."
MY PLACE IS...
NO! I KNOW WHERE MY PLACE IS!
AND IT'S HERE WITH YOU!

AND I KNOW WHAT MY ELEMENT IS!
I AM FIRE!
WE CAN'T PUT OUT THE FIRE OR BREAK THE ROCK. HOW DO WE DEFEAT THIS THING?
LET'S TAKE A BREATHER AND TRY AGAIN.
BUNCH OF GOOD THAT'LL DO!
WE THREW EVERYTHING WE HAD AT IT AND GOT NOTHING.

BOOOM
KRAAK
AAAH!
I AM FIRE!


WOOOSH
WHAT HAPPENED TO TARANEE? WHAT'S SHE DOING?
SHE'S ABSORBING THE CUSTODIAN'S FIRE!
WAAAMP
BUT IT'S DANGEROUS!
WE HAVE TO HELP HER!

WATER!
EARTH!
SBRANG
K-PLASH

TARANEE, YOU OKAY?
I...
TARANEE!
IT'S OVER!
I THINK I'M STUCK LIKE THIS!
...
182
YOU WON'T HURT ME.
YES YOU CAN. GIMME YOUR HAND!
I CAN'T...
BUT IF HAY LIN TOUCHES HER...
...
AND I DON'T THINK I CAN ACCEPT THAT.

FSSS
FSSS
LET'S GO BACK DOWN!
THE POWER OF FIRE IS THE MOST DESTRUCTIVE OF ALL.
BUT EVEN FIRE BOWS BEFORE TRUE STRENGTH.
THE STRENGTH OF COURAGE, FRIENDSHIP, AND TRUST!

ROOM 112
TRY TO GET SOME REST.
I REALLY NEED IT.
WE'RE GOING BACK DOWNSTAIRS. WE GOTTA FIND...
WILL...
YES?
I'VE GOT THE STONE.
THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!
I HAVEN'T LET IT GO SINCE I TOOK IT FROM THE CUSTODIAN.
AFTER WHAT YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH, YOU MUST BE THIRSTY.
WHAT'S IT LIKE TO BE A GIANT MATCH?
REALLY, REALLY HOT!
HA-HA-HA!
UNBELIEV-ABLE!

LATER
YAWWN... DID I SLEEP A LOT?
AND YOU SNORED EVEN MORE!
I WON THE TREASURE HUNT, THANK YOU VERY MUCH!
WHAT'S THAT?
HEY! YOU CHEATED!
IT'S NOT MY FAULT IF I SAW WHERE THE PRIZE WAS HIDDEN.
I JUST DIDN'T EXPECT CORNELIA'S GRANDMA TO TAKE IT SO BADLY...
WE BROKE HER WINNING STREAK!
HEE HEE!
THE VISION JUST CAME TO ME!
HURRY! THE BUS WILL BE HERE IN FIVE MINUTES.
BYE, CORNELIA. SEE YOU AT SCHOOL!
NOW WE'RE GOING TO TALK ABOUT HOW TO PICK FRIENDS.
BELIEVE IT OR NOT, I CHOSE THE BEST ONES!

FINALLY...
C'MON, TARANEE. INSERT THE STONE.
IT'S GONNA FEEL GREAT, I PROMISE!
SLAAASH
THERE WE GO!
CLACK
ANOTHER LOCK OPEN!

ANOTHER STEP CLOSER TO MATT. WE'LL GET HIM OUT OF THAT BOOK SOON!
I SURE HOPE SO!
WE'D BETTER GO. IF I'M LATE AGAIN, DAD'S GONNA LOCK ME IN MY ROOM, AND IT WON'T BE AS EASY TO SET ME FREE!
HEE HEE!
CEDRIC, DON'T LEAVE THAT BOOK UNTIL IT TELLS YOU THE NEXT RIDDLE.
ISN'T THAT WHAT I'VE BEEN DOING?
AND LIKE YOU'LL KEEP DOING!
OBVIOUSLY ...
END OF CHAPTER 59

Witch
Will
Irma
Taranee
Cornelia
Hay Lin

60

Air and Earth

"Can I really feel an emotion like love?"

BY THE ETERNAL LIGHTS! ORACLE, WHAT'S GOING ON?
LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!
THE TRANS-MUTING CARDS! THEY'RE OUT OF CONTROL!

THIS IS OUTRAGEOUS! NOTHING LIKE THIS HAS EVER HAPPENED IN KANDRAKAR. ARE YOU HURT?
JUST SUPERFICIAL SCRATCHES. THEY WILL BE GONE IN A FEW SECONDS.
WHAT REALLY HURTS IS THAT I CANNOT COMMUNICATE WITH THE FIVE ELEMENTS.
THE TRANSMUTING CARDS REFUSE TO TRANSLATE THEIR THOUGHTS?
ON THE CONTRARY, YAN LIN. THE ELEMENTS' FEELINGS ARE VERY CLEAR.
WHY ARE THE ELEMENTS RESTLESS? IS IT BECAUSE OF THE GUARDIANS' MISSION?
SADLY, YES. WILL AND HER FRIENDS HAVE TO SET MATT FREE, BUT...
...THE YOUNG EARTHLING IS TRAPPED IN A MAGICAL BOOK.
WE KNOW ALL ABOUT THAT EVIL OBJECT.
NO, ENDARNO. YOU DO NOT KNOW THE WHOLE TRUTH.
?

YOU KNOW AN EVIL CREATURE LURKS INSIDE THAT BOOK...
...BUT WHAT YOU DO NOT KNOW IS THAT THE CREATURE IS WHAT IS LEFT OF JONATHAN LUDMOORE!
THE OLD ALCHEMIST! HE'S TRYING TO RECOVER THE SYMBOLS OF THE ELEMENTS?
YES. HE WILL USE THEM TO OPEN THE LOCKS ON THE BOOK.
SO HE'S USING THE GIRLS TO BREAK OUT OF HIS PRISON.
WE HAVE TO DO SOMETHING, ORACLE!
WHAT? YOU KNOW WE CANNOT INTERFERE.
EVEN THOUGH LUDMOORE HAS THE SYMBOLS OF WATER AND FIRE...

"...AND PLANS TO CLAIM THOSE OF AIR AND EARTH AS WELL."
TWO RIDDLES AT ONCE! CAN YOU BELIEVE IT?
C'MON, CORNELIA! ISN'T THAT WEIRD?
THE MAGIC BOOK ASKED US TO RECOVER TWO SYMBOLS. SO?
TARANEE, WE'RE GOING TO RECOVER THE SYMBOL OF EARTH EASILY ENOUGH.
I DON'T LIKE THAT WE HAD TO SPLIT UP FROM THE OTHERS.
YEAH... BUT WILL AND HAY LIN ARE ALONE LOOKING FOR THE AIR SYMBOL!
IF YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT THEM, CONTACT THEM TELEPATHICALLY.
RIGHT AWAY.

SO?
NOTHING. MAYBE HEATHERFIELD'S TOO FAR.
THIS PLACE IS TO BLAME. IT'S ONLY GOOD FOR GOATS AND VULTURES.
HEY, ARE YOU SURE THIS IS THE RIGHT WAY?
THINK ABOUT IT. REMEMBER THE NEW RIDDLE?
"THEY SLIP FAST IN THE DARK, BETWEEN COLD FINGERS OF STONE."
NICE ONE. IT MEANS EVERYTHING AND NOTHING.
YOU'RE WRONG, IRMA. THE MAP ON THE BOOKSHOP WALL POINTED TO THIS MOUNTAIN...
...AND TELL ME THOSE DON'T LOOK LIKE THE FINGERS OF AN OPEN HAND!

IN THE MEANTIME, AT THE EXACT CENTER OF HEATHERFIELD...
HEY! ARE THOSE WINGS?
?
NICHOLAS! WHAT KIND OF A QUESTION IS THAT?
NO, NO! YOUR SON IS RIGHT.
THE THING IS, THERE'S A... COSTUME PARTY ON THE TOP FLOOR!
HMMM...
196

TING
BYE-BYE, THEN!
BYE!
DON'T FLY TOO HIGH! THE CLOUDS ARE DARK TODAY.
...
FRUMP
DID YOU HEAR HIM? MAYBE WE SHOULDN'T HAVE TRANSFORMED.
NO, THIS IS BETTER. WE'LL BE READY IN CASE OF TROUBLE.
...AND ANYWAY, DON'T WORRY. WITH THESE CLOTHES ON TOP OF THE MAGICAL ONES, NOBODY WILL NOTICE.
YOU'RE RIGHT, WILL. SORRY. I'M JUST JITTERY.
I CAN'T EVEN GET IN TOUCH WITH THE OTHERS. CAN YOU?
NO, ME NEITHER. WE'LL TRY AGAIN WHEN WE'RE OUT OF THE ELEVATOR.

WOOOOOSH
THIS IS THE PLACE. IT WAS PRETTY CLEAR ON THE MAP.
BUT THE RIDDLE THE BOOK GAVE US IS LESS CLEAR.
"IN A PLACE WITHOUT SLEEP, WHERE DREAMS DON'T MAKE YOU FLY..." WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?
I DUNNO, BUT IF THIS WIND KEEPS UP, WE'LL BE FLYING FOR SURE...
WOOOOOSH
...AND SOMETHING TELLS ME THAT KID WAS RIGHT!
RUMBLE

FRUUUUSH
A STORM... JUST WHAT WE NEEDED!
AREN'T YOU THE GUARDIAN OF THE POWER OF WATER?
OH YEAH!
SNAP
YOU'RE RIGHT, CORNY! AS USUAL...
GUYS! I CAN SENSE SOMETHING.
HAY LIN! FINALLY, I CAN HEAR YOU.
YEAH. NEXT TIME, WE'D BETTER USE CELL PHONES.
I DON'T THINK THERE'D BE A SIGNAL FOR THAT EITHER. WE'RE SURROUNDED BY MOUNTAINS.

WELL, WE'D HAVE A GREAT VIEW...
OH NO!
...IF IT WASN'T STORMING LIKE CRAZY ON THIS ROOF!
HOLY SMOKES!
WHAT'S UP, HAY LIN? DID YOU SEE SOMETHING?
HSSSS
...JUST SAW US!
NO, TARANEE. BUT I'M AFRAID THAT SOMETHING...
WOOO

I LOST THEM.
ME TOO. IT'S AS IF WILL AND HAY LIN SUDDENLY STOPPED THINKING!
I TOLD YOU LEAVING THEM ALONE WAS CRAZY.
WAIT! WHERE'RE YOU GOING?
WHAT...?
CRUNCH
TARANEE!
KRAAACK
KRAAAAM

WOOOOSHKAAAAAACK
AAAAH!
NOOOO!
EEEK!

SOME GO UP, AND SOME GO DOWN!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, CEDRIC?
TUCK
IN A NUTSHELL, THAT IT'S MY TURN TO WIN. CHECKMATE!
USUALLY, YOU LOVE TACTICAL GAMES, ORUBE.
I'M JUST BORED OF BEING COOPED UP IN YOUR BOOKSHOP.
I THOUGHT YOU'D GROWN ACCUSTOMED TO MY COMPANY...
I'M NOT MAD AT YOU. I JUST KEEP THINKING I SHOULD'VE GONE WITH THE GIRLS.
YOU'RE HERE TO KEEP AN EYE ON ME, RIGHT? THE MAGIC BOOK COULD SPEAK AND...
...REVEAL THE LAST RIDDLE ANY MINUTE. I KNOW!

THE FACT REMAINS THAT MY FRIENDS SPLIT UP. THEY SHOULDN'T HAVE!
BUT WILL WAS IMPATIENT.
AND CAN YOU BLAME HER? AFTER ALL, HER MATT'S STILL IN HERE.
YOU SHOULDN'T JOKE ABOUT THEIR BOND.
LIVING ON THIS PLANET, EVEN I'VE REALIZED I CAN FEEL NEW EMOTIONS.
WATCH OUT. FEELINGS ARE INFECTIOUS. THEY CHANGE PEOPLE!
THEY JUST MAKE PEOPLE DIFFERENT. USUALLY FOR THE BETTER!
ADMIT IT! YOU ACT TOUGH, BUT YOU'VE CHANGED TOO!
?!
NO! ORUBE'S WRONG. I STILL HATE THIS WORLD, AND I HATE THE GUARDIANS!

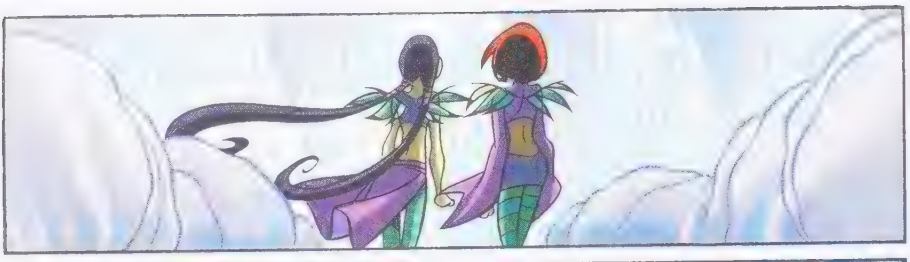
THEN WHY DO I CATCH MYSELF FANTASIZING ABOUT TELLING HER OF THE DEAL I MADE WITH THE CREATURE IN THE BOOK...
...AND ASKING HER TO RUN AWAY WITH ME AS SOON AS I GET MY POWERS BACK?
WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME? WHY DO I FEEL THIS WAY?
...YOU'VE CHANGED TOO!
...YOU'VE CHANGED...
...CHANGED...
COULD SHE BE RIGHT? CAN I REALLY FEEL AN EMOTION...
...LIKE LOVE?

MMMH...DEAR, DID YOU PUT THE SNACKS IN THE KIDS' BACKPACKS?
IRMA! SAY GOOD-BYE TO YOUR HUBBY AND KIDS. TIME TO WAKE UP!
HUH? WHO? WHAT...?
OOF, CORNELIA! I WAS DREAMING...
PRECISELY. WHAT YOU JUST HAD WAS A DREAM.
NOW OPEN YOUR EYES AND ENJOY THIS *NIGHTMARE*!
OH, FUDGE!

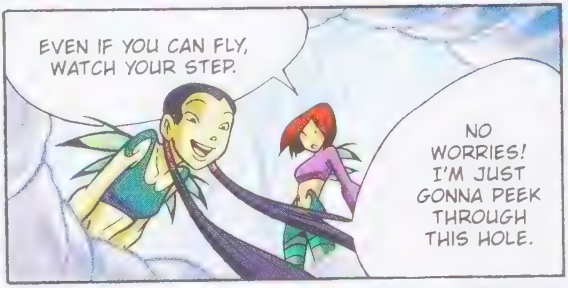
WHERE ARE WE?
LOOKS LIKE A FAIRY-TALE FOREST. ALL THAT'S MISSING IS THE BIG BAD WOLF.
WE FELL FROM THERE AND ENDED UP UNDERGROUND.
WE'VE GONE RIGHT DOWN IN THE WORLD.
YOU FIND ANYTHING, TARANEE?
I'VE BEEN LOOKING AROUND, AND I LIT A FEW FIRES TO SEE BETTER.
ISN'T THAT RISKY? WON'T IT SET EVERYTHING ON FIRE?
NOT WITH MAGICAL FLAMES. AND IN CASE YOU HAVEN'T NOTICED...
...EVERY PLANT, TREE, FLOWER, EVEN THE GRASS... THEY'RE ALL MADE OF STONE!

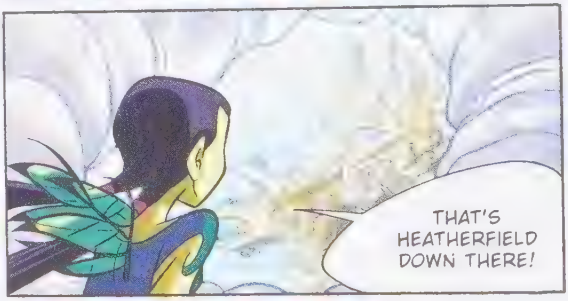
ANYWAY, FOR A STUFFY PLACE, IT SMELLS NICE!
YEAH. REMINDS ME OF EMBERS IN THE FIREPLACE.
IT REMINDS ME OF THE SEA!
YOU'RE RAMBLING. TARANEE'S FIRE IS HARMLESS, AND I DON'T SEE A BEACH ANYWHERE!
BE CAREFUL. THE ETERNAL CUSTODIAN MUST BE HERE SOMEWHERE.
AND REMEMBER, EACH CUSTODIAN LOOKS AND ACTS DIFFERENTLY.
MAYBE THIS ONE'S TIRED OF PROTECTING THE STONE AND WILL JUST GIVE IT AWAY!
If you're done, I suggest we keep looking in silence.
?
I saw SHADOWS moving among those trees!

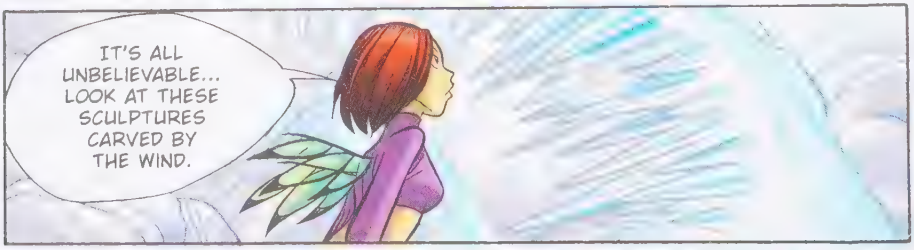
ANOTHER PLACE, OTHER SHADOWS...
WILL, ARE YOU THERE?
YEAH, I'M HERE.
EVEN THOUGH I FEEL LIKE I'M WALKING ON A GIANT COTTON BALL.
I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT TWISTER BROUGHT US HERE, YOU KNOW?
YOU MEAN INTO THE SKY, ONTO WHITE, FIRM CLOUDS...
...OR STRAIGHT INTO A DREAM?
?!

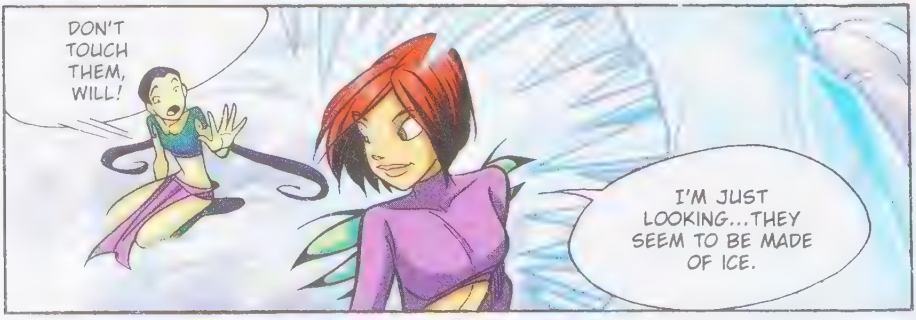


IT'S WONDERFUL! LIKE BEING IN HEAVEN.
CERTAINLY AN APPROPRIATE PLACE FOR THE SYMBOL OF AIR.


EVEN IF YOU CAN FLY, WATCH YOUR STEP.
NO WORRIES! I'M JUST GONNA PEEK THROUGH THIS HOLE.


THAT'S HEATHERFIELD DOWN THERE!


IT'S ALL UNBELIEVABLE... LOOK AT THESE SCULPTURES CARVED BY THE WIND.


DON'T TOUCH THEM, WILL!
I'M JUST LOOKING...THEY SEEM TO BE MADE OF ICE.

AH!
THAT THING... I DIDN'T THINK IT WAS ALIVE, BUT IT SHOT ICE DARTS AT ME!
WILL! YOU OKAY?
I'M LUCKY. IT'S JUST A SCRATCH...
ANYWAY, WE'D BETTER LEAVE. BECAUSE THAT *THING*, AS YOU CALL IT...
...IS MOST DEFINITELY ALIVE!

I'm telling you, it MOVED!
TARANEE, IT'S ONLY A TREE STUMP.
Shhh! Didn't I say be quiet?
LET'S GO. WE'VE BEEN WHISPERING AND CHASING AFTER SHADOWS FOR HALF AN HOUR.
HOW DO I CONVINCE YOU THAT THERE'S ABSOLUTELY NOTH—?
?
THERE!
SHATZZ
WHAT NOW? YOU SAW A JUMPING ROCK?
YOU SHOULD KEEP DOWN AND STAY ALERT INSTEAD OF MAKING JOKES!

THE CREATURES I SAW WERE RUNNING THAT WAY. WE'RE SURROUNDED!
REALLY? THEN WHY HAVEN'T THEY ATTACKED YET?
I DON'T KNOW, BUT YOU'RE WORRYING ME MORE THAN THEM, CORNELIA.
YEAH! YOU DON'T SMELL ANYTHING AND DON'T SEE ANY SHADOWS.
YOU JUST WANT US TO GET OUT IN THE OPEN AND MAKE A RACKET.
?
OF COURSE! YOU WANT US TO GET CAUGHT!
IT'S WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE GET NEAR THE CUSTODIANS OF OUR SYMBOLS.
THOSE MONSTERS TRICK US. THEY MANIPULATE WHAT WE SEE AND THINK...
...AND FORCE US TO DO THINGS WE'LL LATER *REGRET*!

I'M NOT SCOLDING YOU. I'M JUST SAYING YOU WERE CARELESS.
ANYWAY, I'M FINE NOW. WHERE'S OUR FRIEND?
I REGRET TOUCHING THAT ICE SCULPTURE, OKAY?
OVER THERE. THAT CREATURE'S GOTTA BE OUR ETERNAL CUSTODIAN.
IT'S ABSORBING THE OTHER ICE SCULPTURES AND KEEPS GROWING BIGGER.
CRUNCK
CRUNCK
WHERE'S THE SYMBOL? THE CUSTODIANS WE FOUGHT SO FAR HAD IT ON THEM.
RIGHT, THEY DID.

THERE! I SEE IT!
YOU NAILED IT. THE STONE WITH THE AIR SYMBOL IS ENCASED IN ITS CHEST.
WE JUST GOTTA DISTRACT IT AND...
MMH...
OH NO! WILL!
WH-WHAT'S... HAPPENING?
WHAT'S WRONG? DON'T TELL ME THAT ICE DART WAS POISONED!

I CAN'T KEEP MY EYES OPEN. MY HEAD FEELS HEAVY.
SO...
...HEAVY!
WILL!
HAY LIN! TH-THE CLOUDS UNDER MY FEET... ARE CRUMBLING LIKE SAND!
DON'T WORRY. I'VE GOT YOU!

NOW I GET THE MEANING OF THE RIDDLE...
...A PLACE WITHOUT SLEEP, WHERE DREAMS DON'T MAKE YOU FLY!
AS WILL FALLS ASLEEP, SHE SINKS THROUGH THE CLOUDS.
PROBLEM IS, I DUNNO HOW LONG I CAN HOLD HER UP...
CRUUU NCK
...AND THE CUSTODIAN IS COMING THIS WAY!

"IF ONLY I COULD GET IN TOUCH WITH THE OTHERS..."
CORNELIAAA!
COME OUT, CORNY! WE'RE NOT GONNA HURT YOU.
IT'S FOR YOUR OWN GOOD— TRUST ME!
I CAN'T BELIEVE MY OWN FRIENDS JUST ATTACKED ME!
IN THE OTHER MISSIONS, THE GUARDIAN WHO SHARED THE SYMBOL'S POWER WAS THE MOST VULNERABLE.
SINCE WE'RE LOOKING FOR MY SYMBOL, IRMA AND TARANEE THINK THE CUSTODIAN IS INFLUENCING ME.
BUT THIS TIME, I THINK IT'S THE EXACT OPPOSITE!

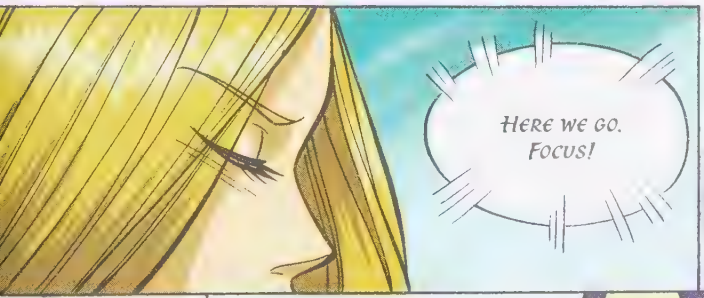
THESE STONE FLOWERS... THEY'RE PERFUMED. MAYBE THAT'S WHAT THE OTHERS ARE SMELLING.
IT COULD BE THAT IT'S TOXIC, BUT I'M IMMUNE!
TAG! YOU'RE IT!
OF COURSE! THAT'S WHY THEY SEE THOSE SHADOWS. THEY...
W-WAIT! I THINK I UNDERSTAND...
THE SHADOWS ARE THE ETERNAL CUSTODIANS, AND THE WAY WE SEE IT...
NO. EITHER YOU REFUSE TO UNDERSTAND OR YOU DON'T WANT TO ADMIT THE TRUTH...
...YOU'RE ON THEIR SIDE!
CORNELIA FINDS HERSELF IN A TOUGH SPOT...

SOMETIMES YOU FIND YOURSELF IN THE WRONG PLACE AT THE WRONG TIME.
IN THIS CASE, THAT PLACE IS ON EARTH. WELL, BENEATH ITS SURFACE...
...AND THE MOMENT IS DRAMATIC—AT LEAST FOR CORNELIA!
SORRY, GUYS, BUT I'VE GOT TO DEFEND MYSELF...
...OR AT LEAST POSTPONE OUR LITTLE QUARREL!
KRAAAM
KAAAM
?
THE CREVASSE I CREATED ISN'T THAT DEEP. THEY'LL BE OKAY!
RUMBLE

Will! Hay Lin! Please, you have to HEAR me!
?!
I...yes! I can finally hear you, Cornelia!
Let's just say I was busy!
Hay Lin? Where were you?
I'd love to. But first...
Okay. But now you gotta help me!
...you gotta find a way to help me!

MEANWHILE, IN KANDRAKAR...
CORNELIA'S BEING CHASED BY HER FRIENDS, AND HAY LIN CAN BARELY SUPPORT WILL.
WE HAVE TO DO SOMETHING, ORACLE!
YOU KNOW WE CAN'T INTERFERE IN THE GUARDIANS' MISSIONS.
UNFORTUNATELY, ENDARNO IS RIGHT, YAN LIN.
HOWEVER, THE TWO OF YOU COULD HELP ME IMPROVE SOME UNPLEASANT WEATHER CONDITIONS...
!
...IN ORDER TO ALLOW THE GIRLS TO COMMUNICATE PROPERLY.
WAIT! THAT'S AGAINST THE RULES.
I MEAN, OUR ROLE... THE ELEMENTS WE REPRESENT... WE SHOULDN'T... WE...

OH WELL.
I JUST WONDER WHAT GOOD IT'LL DO.
WOOOOOSH


HERE WE GO. FOCUS!

I'M TRYING, CORNELIA. YOU SURE IT'LL WORK?

ABSOLUTELY NOT. BUT RIGHT NOW I DON'T SEE ANY OTHER OPTION.
ONLY YOU HAVE THE POWER TO CLEAR THE TOXIC PERFUME IRMA AND TARANEE ARE BREATHING...
...AND ONLY I CAN TRY TO HEAL WILL'S WOUND AND WAKE HER UP.
GOT IT!
IT'S LIKE IN OUR PREVIOUS MISSIONS. OPPOSING POWERS HELPING EACH OTHER!
THIS TIME, AIR MUST HELP EARTH, AND EARTH MUST HELP AIR!
THAT'S WHY WE GOTTA TRY TO TELEPORT!

TELEPORTATION IS THE POWER OF INSTANTLY MOVING FROM ONE PLACE TO ANOTHER.
IT SEEMS EASY. YOU JUST JOIN YOUR FINGERS, LIKE THIS...
...AND BECOME BEAMS OF LIGHT THAT SHOOT IN THE DESIRED DIRECTION.
THEN, IF YOU FIND YOURSELF IN THE WRONG PLACE AT THE WRONG TIME...
...THERE STILL REMAINS THE OPTION TO CHANGE PLACES!

OR NOT?
No!
I DON'T BELIEVE IT, CORNELIA. I'M STILL HERE!
ME TOO, HAY LIN. THE TELEPORTATION DIDN'T WORK!
LET'S TRY TO...
WAAAMP
AH!
CORNELIA, WHAT HAPPENED? CORNELIA!

I LOST CONTACT AGAIN, AND I CAN'T HOLD WILL ANY LONGER...
THERE'S NO POINT IN JUMPING WITH HER. I COULD NEVER SUPPORT HER ALL THE WAY TO THE GROUND.
IF ONLY SHE'D WAKE UP...
WH-WHAT...?

UHN...
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! I HEALED THE WOUND!
OH, I'M SO DIZZY! IT'S LIKE SOMEONE HIT ME IN THE HEAD WITH A HAMMER!
OH, WILL!
WOW, YOU'RE SO HAPPY! I WAS JUST NAPPING.
DON'T YOU GET IT? IT'S WONDERFUL! THE TELEPORTATION HAD AN UNEXPECTED EFFECT!
WHAT ARE YOU ON ABOUT?
THE FACT THAT NOW I HAVE CORNELIA'S POWERS...

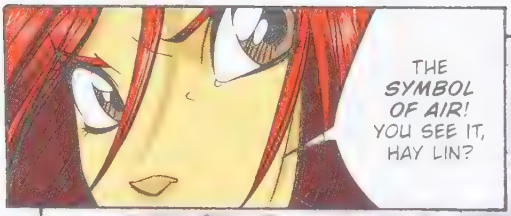
"...AND CORNELIA HAS *MINE*!"
WAAAAMP
TARANEE! YOU HAVE TO LET ME GO!
I'M SORRY, BUT IT'S YOUR FAULT FOR STARTING IT WITH THAT CREVASSE!
YES, THE CREVASSE! I'LL CREATE ANOTHER ONE TO...
.....
OOOH!
?

I DIDN'T KNOW YOU COULD FLY!
M-ME NEITHER!
WE DON'T WANNA HURT YOU...JUST KINDA STUN YOU!
I'M ALREADY STUNNED...
GET DOWN!
YEAH, RIGHT!
...YOU THINK...
...I'M THAT DUUUMB!

I SAID COME HERE!
WHAAA
TRZZZ
GASP!
I FLUTTER LIKE A LEAF IN THE WIND!
I CLEARLY HAVE HAY LIN'S POWERS. THE PROBLEM IS, I DON'T KNOW HOW TO CONTROL THEM!
EEEK! SOMEBODY MOVE THAT...
SBAM
...TREE!

OVER THERE! NO, UP THERE!
UH-OH! TIME I BREEZED OUT!
WE NEED A WIND TO BLOW AWAY THE SCENT OF THOSE FLOWERS...
...BUT FIRST, I SHOULD FIGURE OUT HOW... OH NO!
I LOST CONTROL AGAIN!
OUCH! OOF!
STUMP
NOT EVEN A SOFT LANDING! THE GRASS HERE IS AS SPIKY AS A BED OF NAILS!

HANG ON... THE GRASS!
THIS MEADOW...
WOOOOOSH
YES, FROM UP HERE, IT'S ALL CLEAR.
THE FLOWERS FOLLOW A PATTERN THAT LOOKS LIKE...
...THE SYMBOL OF EARTH!



YES, BUT...

NO BUTS. YOU FOCUS ON THAT. I'LL DISTRACT IT.

KRUUNK

THIS TIME, YOU CAN BE SURE...

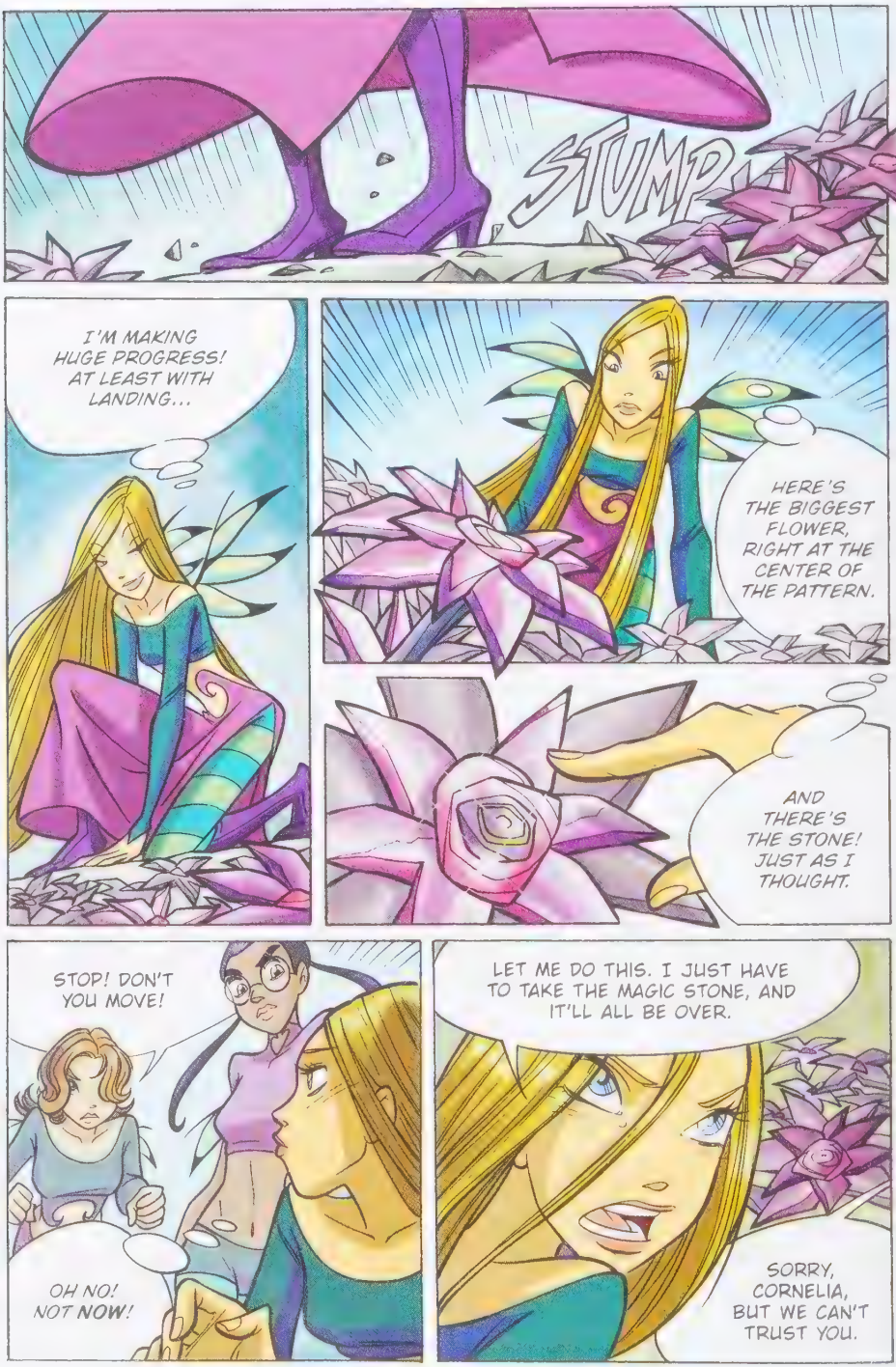
...BY SURPRISE!

SHAAAATRILL

FTUMP FTUMP

...THAT CREATURE WON'T CATCH ME...

KRAAAAM
SPAK
FTUMP
FTUMP
SPAK
FTUMP
SPAK
IF I COULD FLY, I'D REACH THAT SYMBOL IN AN INSTANT.
SHAAARZZZ
BUT THIS TIME, I'LL HAVE TO IMPROVISE!


STUMP
I'M MAKING HUGE PROGRESS! AT LEAST WITH LANDING...
HERE'S THE BIGGEST FLOWER, RIGHT AT THE CENTER OF THE PATTERN.
AND THERE'S THE STONE! JUST AS I THOUGHT.
STOP! DON'T YOU MOVE!
OH NO! NOT NOW!
LET ME DO THIS. I JUST HAVE TO TAKE THE MAGIC STONE, AND IT'LL ALL BE OVER.
SORRY, CORNELIA, BUT WE CAN'T TRUST YOU.

COME ON, GUYS! WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU? WE FIGHT TOGETHER, TOWARD THE SAME GOAL! HOW COULD YOU FORGET THAT?
NICE TRY, BUT IT LACKS IMAGINATION!
YAHIII...
FINE. YOU ASKED FOR IT!
?

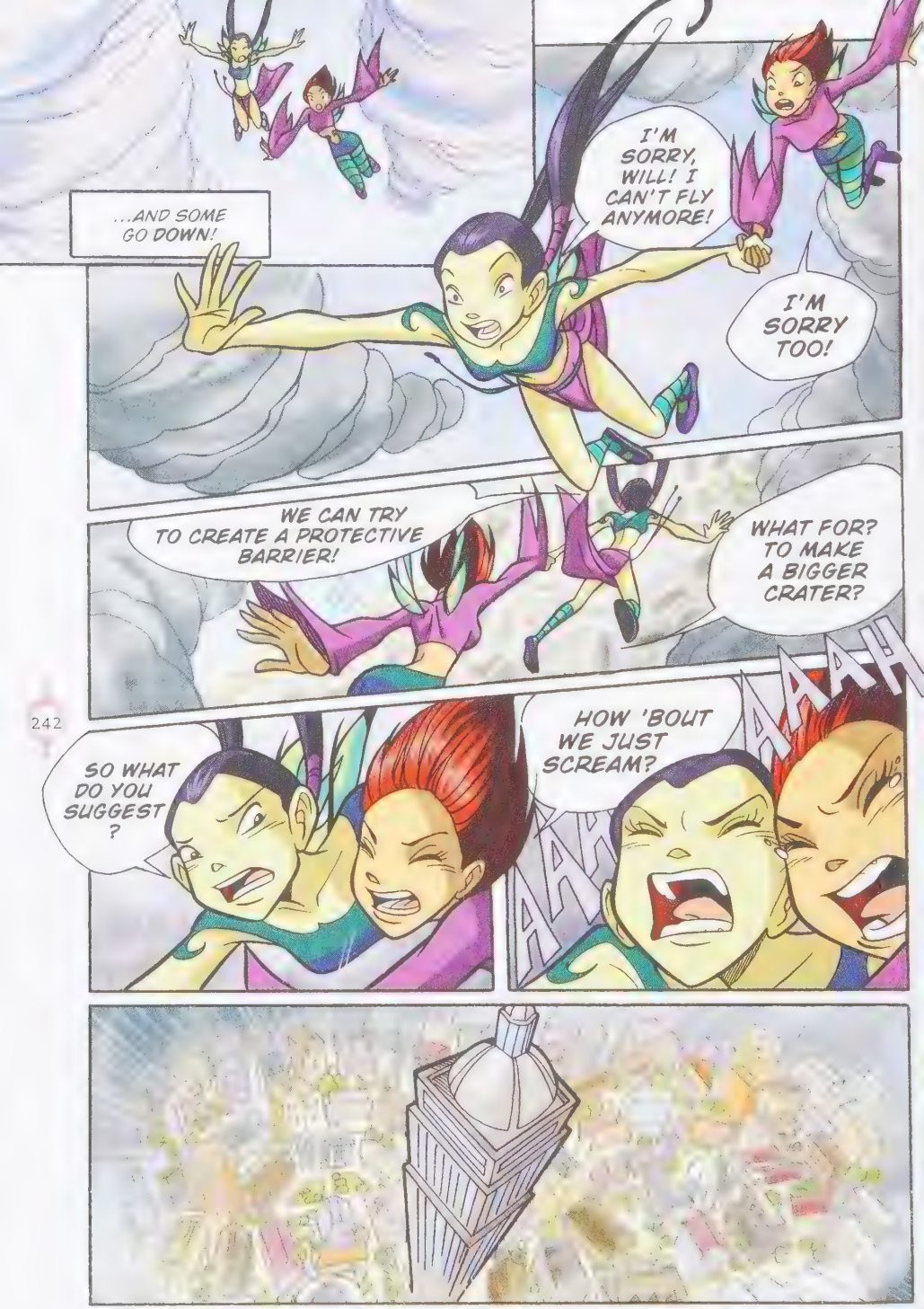
...AAAH!
AHEM! YELLING ASIDE, I THINK HAY LIN DOES THIS, MORE OR LESS.
FOR WHAT?
WOOOOOSH
TO DO THIS!

WOOOOSH
YES! WHOO-HOO!
WOOOOOSH
!
WOOOOOSH
WELL, THEN?
S-SO WHAT? I CAN BREATHE BETTER. THAT ALL?
WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? TAKE THE STONE BEFORE THE CAVE FILLS BACK UP...

"...WITH SHADOWS!"
OH NO! THE CUSTODIAN MUST'VE SEEN MY SHADOW AGAINST THE CLOUDS.
I WAS JUST A FLY ON ITS BACK, BUT NOW...
KRRRUNK
GO, HAY LIN! NOW!
KRAAASH
SHAAATRZZZ
SHAAATRZZZ
YES, NOW!

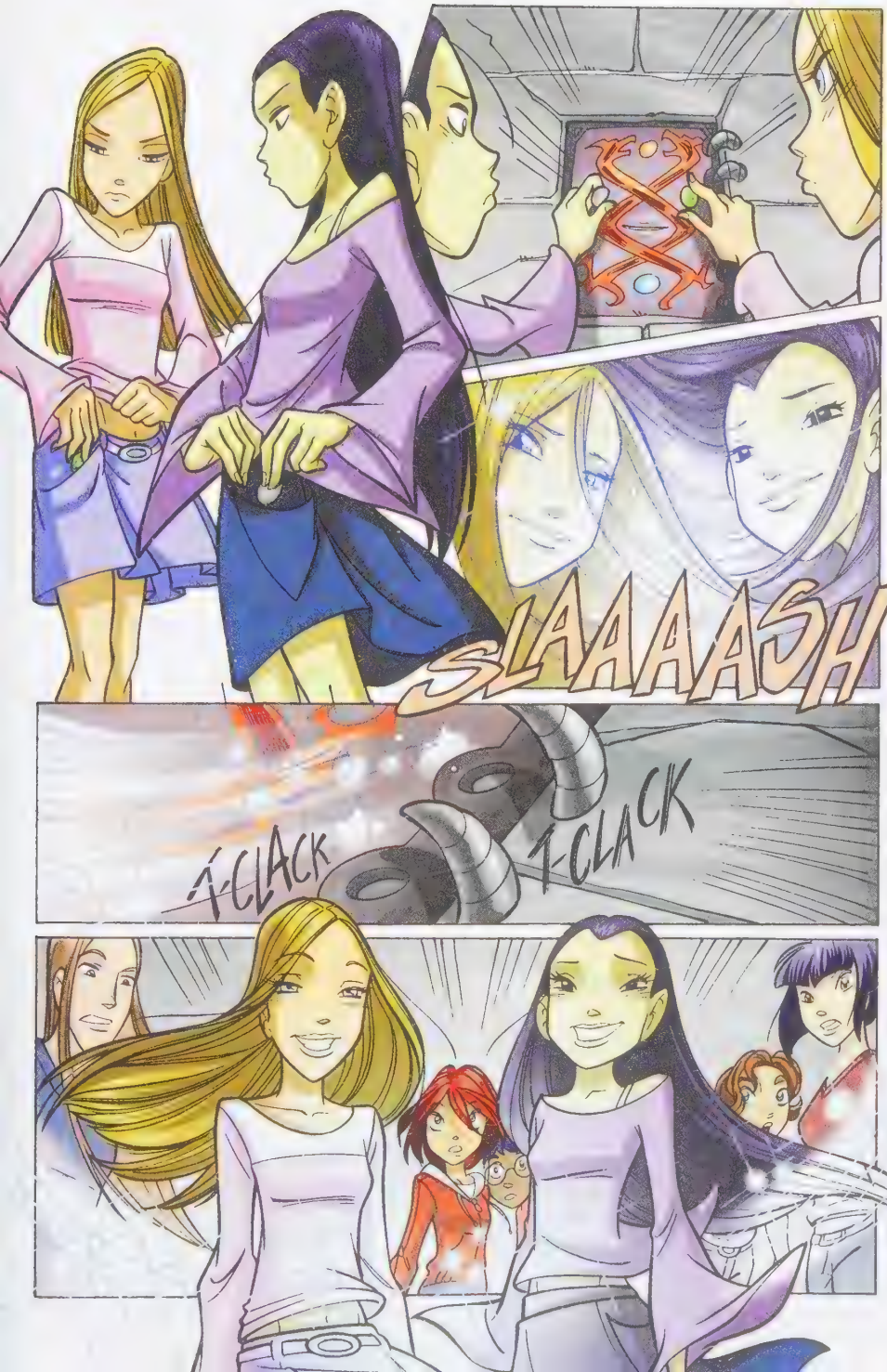
JUST AS HAY LIN DIVES TO GRAB THE SYMBOL OF AIR...
...CORNELIA TAKES THE SYMBOL OF EARTH!
JUST LIKE BEFORE, THE ETERNAL CUSTODIANS DISAPPEAR ALONG WITH THEIR ENVIRONMENTS.
240
IN THE FIRST CASE, IT HAPPENS ALL TOO QUICKLY...
?
...WHILE IN THE SECOND...
RUUUMBLE

CRAAASH
EVERYTHING'S COLLAPSING!
CRASH SBAAAM
GRAB ON TO ME. WE'VE GOT TO TRY TO FLY TO THE EXIT!
SURE YOU CAN DO THIS?
NGH! NO!
SO FOR THE LAST TIME, SOME GO UP...
RUMBLE
BUT I'M GONNA TRY!


...AND SOME GO DOWN!
I'M SORRY, WILL! I CAN'T FLY ANYMORE!
I'M SORRY TOO!
WE CAN TRY TO CREATE A PROTECTIVE BARRIER!
WHAT FOR? TO MAKE A BIGGER CRATER?
SO WHAT DO YOU SUGGEST?
HOW 'BOUT WE JUST SCREAM?
AAAH
AAAH

HA HA HA HA
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT. PLEASE TELL ME AGAIN!
ONCE WE WERE BACK ABOVE-GROUND, WE LANDED IN A BUSH OF THORNS!
THINK IT'S FUNNY, YOU SNAKE?
LET'S SAY IT'LL MAKE THE REST OF THE EVENING MORE PLEASANT.
DON'T LOOK AT ME LIKE THAT. IT'S NOT MY FAULT!
HOW COULD I HAVE KNOWN THE EXCHANGE OF POWERS WAS TEMPORARY?
WELL, THANK GOODNESS FOR THAT!
?

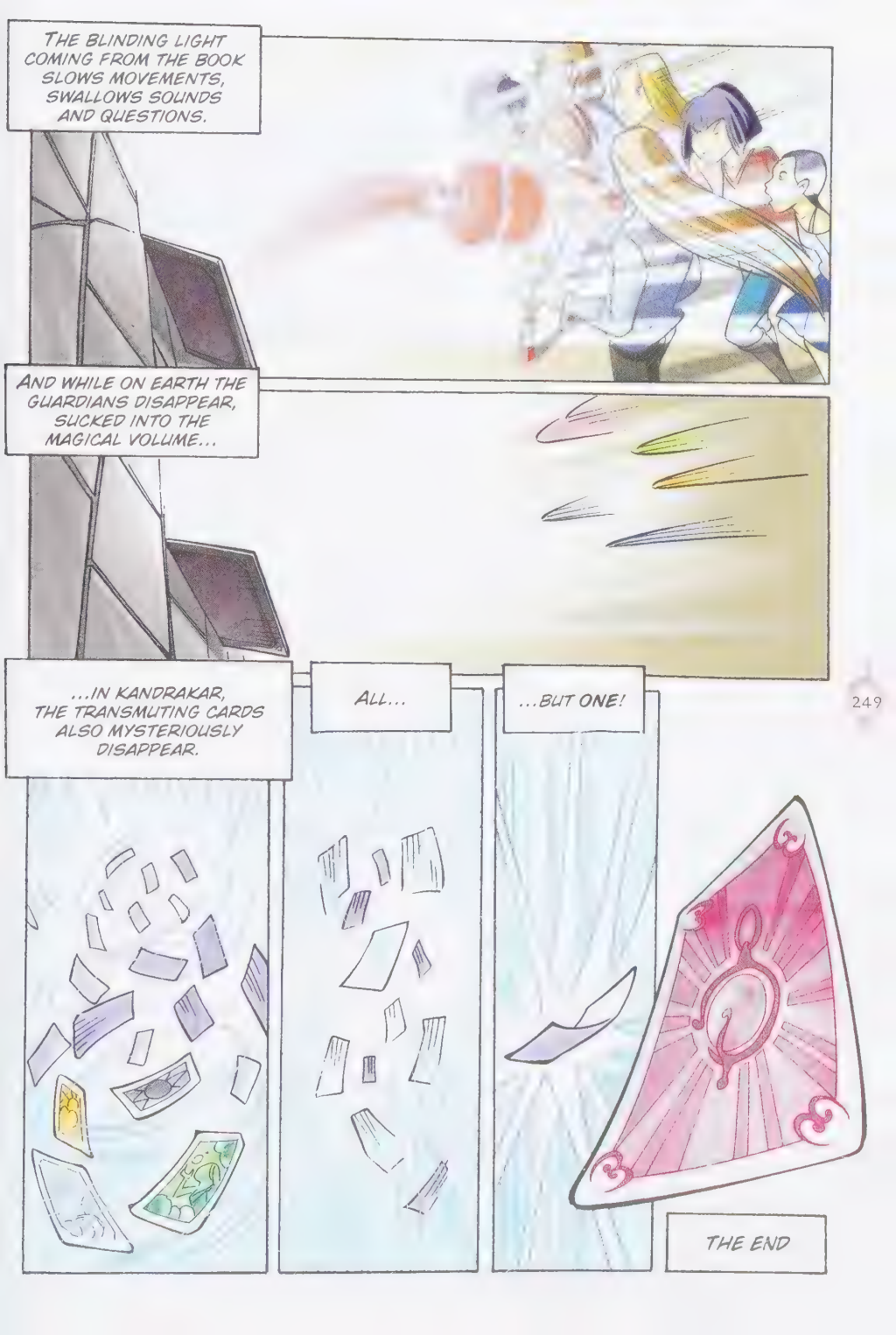
WILL! HAY LIN! WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU?
NOTHING A TANK OF CHAMOMILE TEA CAN'T FIX.
SOME FOUNDATION MIGHT HELP TOO. YOU'RE WHITE AS A GHOST!
"...WHEN I REALIZED I COULD FLY AGAIN!"
I'LL BET. WE WERE ABOUT TO SPLATTER ON THE CITY HALL ROOF...
TRUST ME! YOUR POWERS ARE THE BEST!
YOURS AREN'T HALF BAD EITHER. EXCEPT WHEN YOU'RE PLUMMETING!
...WE'VE GOT SOMETHING MORE IMPORTANT TO DO!
WE'LL EXCHANGE STORIES SOME OTHER TIME. NOW...


SLAAAASH
T-CLACK
T-CLACK

SO? I'M WAITING.
WHAT DO YOU WANT?
YOU KNOW! I WANT YOU TO TRANSLATE THE BOOK'S WORDS. I WANT THE LAST RIDDLE!
I WANT MATT!
I... I HEAR NOTHING. THE BOOK ISN'T SPEAKING TO ME!
TRUE... BUT INSTEAD OF THE PUPIL, NOW THERE'S A SLOT!
DON'T TRY TO TRICK US, CEDRIC. I'VE BEEN WAITING TOO LONG FOR THIS MOMENT!
LOOK! THE EYE IS OPENING.

THE HEART OF KANDRA-KAR!
SO THAT'S THE LAST JEWEL TO PLACE IN THE COVER.
WILL, YOU'RE NOT GOING TO DO IT, ARE YOU?
WILL!
ORUBE'S RIGHT. YOU CAN'T GIVE IT AWAY!
IF YOU DO IT WILLINGLY, YOU'LL LOSE YOUR POWERS !!
ACTUALLY...IT'S SHAKING IN MY HAND. IT SEEMS UNDECIDED...
...LIKE IT'S SCARED!

SCARED OF THE UNKNOWN?
SCARED OF LEAVING ITS OWNER?
OR SCARED OF FALLING INTO THE WRONG HANDS?
WISSSH!
FRUUUMP
WISSSH!
FLIP
AAAH!
FLIP
WIIILL!
N-NO! LEAVE IT ALONE! LEAVE IT...

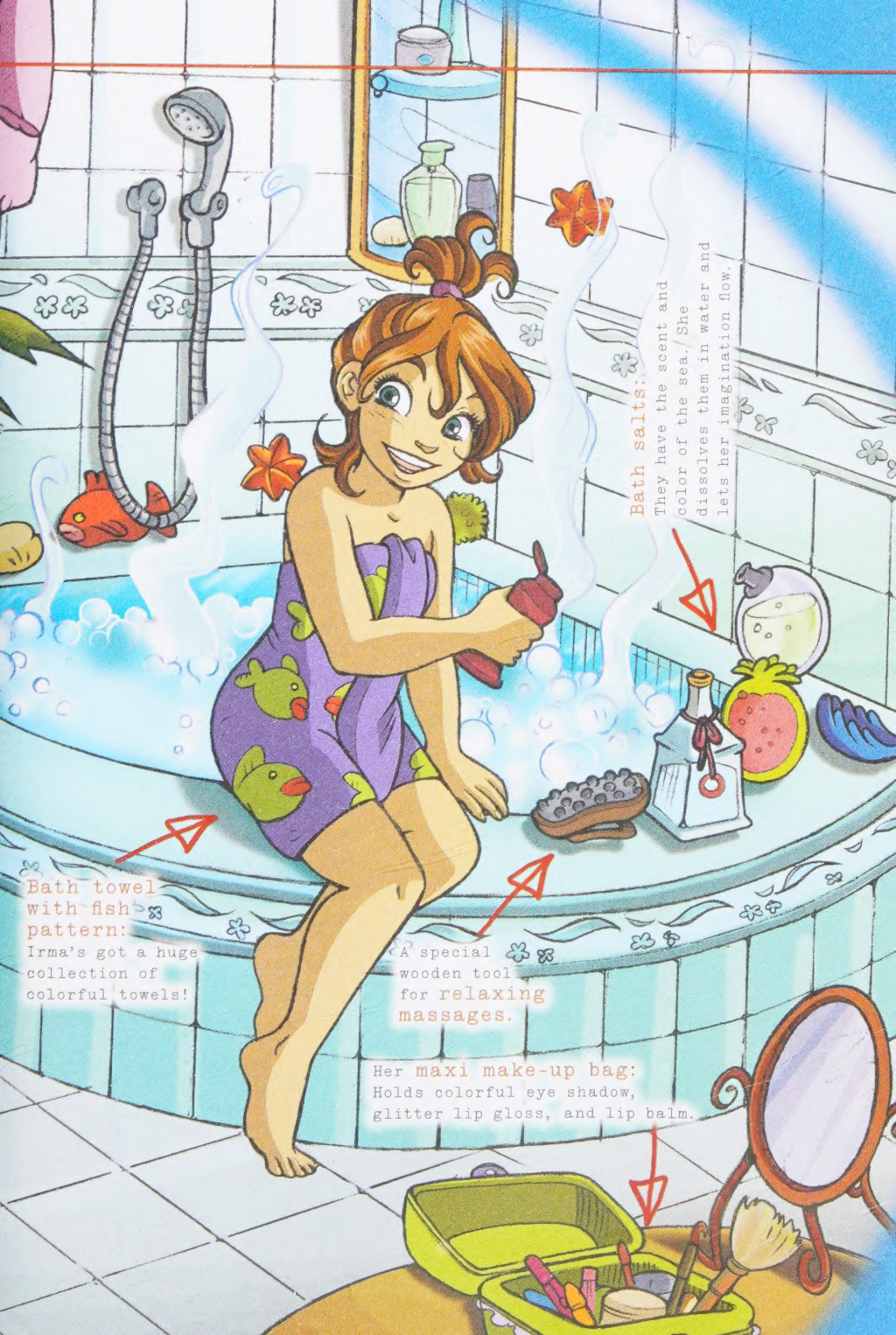

THE BLINDING LIGHT COMING FROM THE BOOK SLOWS MOVEMENTS, SWALLOWS SOUNDS AND QUESTIONS.
AND WHILE ON EARTH THE GUARDIANS DISAPPEAR, SUCKED INTO THE MAGICAL VOLUME...
...IN KANDRAKAR, THE TRANSMUTING CARDS ALSO MYSTERIOUSLY DISAPPEAR.
ALL...
...BUT ONE!
THE END

Read on in Volume 16!

Hay Lin's Attic

Hay Lin loved drawing
and her attic's fully
stocked!
It picks up only
one station, and
it's always on to
keep her company
They each have a
"heart" inside—
a little personalized
note.

Irma's Bathroom


Bath salts:
They have the scent and color of the sea. She dissolves them in water and lets her imagination flow.
Bath towel with fish pattern:
Irma's got a huge collection of colorful towels!
A special wooden tool for relaxing massages.
Her maxi make-up bag:
Holds colorful eye shadow, glitter lip gloss, and lip balm.

Part V. The Book of Elements • Volume 3

15

Series Created by Elisabetta Gnone
Comic Art Direction: Alessandro Barbucci, Barbara Canepa

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An Enemy Redeemed?

To save Matt, the Guardians must track down the elemental gems required to open the Book of Elements, but no one ever said the task would be easy! Meanwhile, Cedric finds himself increasingly drawn to Orube...

W7-AZJ-217

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